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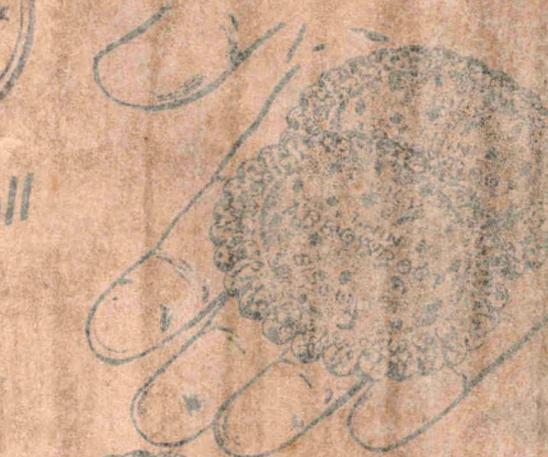
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through various agencies—
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clouds, the golden sunshine,
the ripening corn, the lush
green meadows,

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has begun.

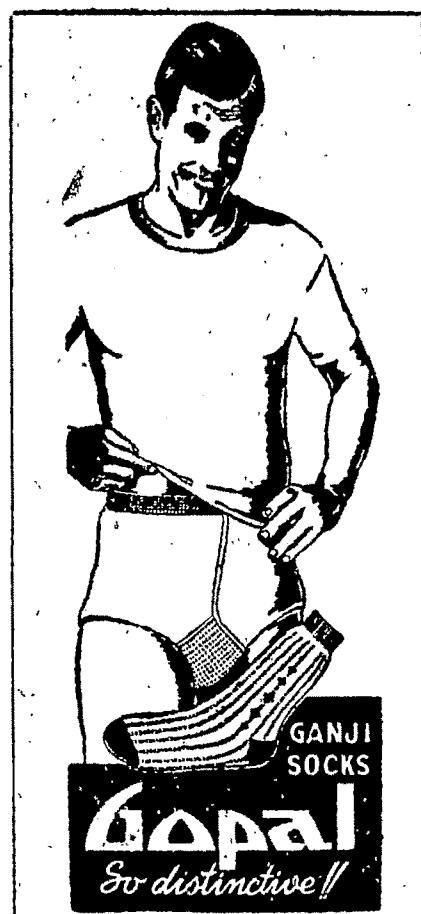
It is time to forget yesterday's
weariness and go out on
a pleasure-packed holiday.
For those away from home,
it is time to return.

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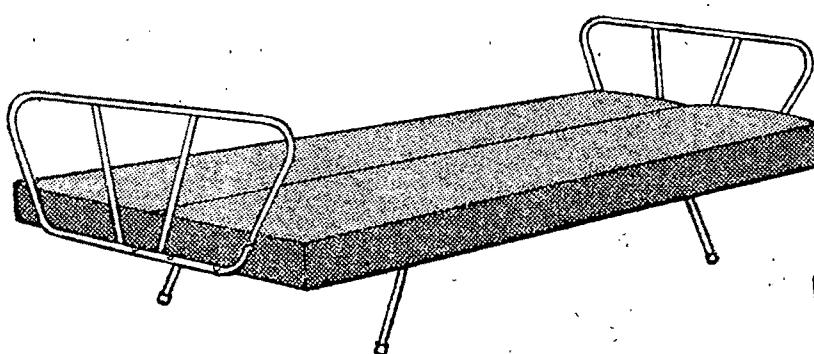
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DURGA

THE ALL-AUSPICIOUS

BY DR. ROMA GHOSH

"Sarva-mangala-mangalye sive
Sarvartha-sadhike !
Saranye Tryambake Gauri
Narayani Namastu 'Te !'
"O thou all-auspicious one,
O Gauri, Bestower of gifts divine !
O thou refuge, Mother of three worlds,
Obeisance to Thee, Narayani benign !

Such is the great and grand and glorious eulogy of our Beloved Mother, sounding and resounding all around, in sweetest melody, during these holy and hilarious Mother-Worship celebrations. But why is the Divine Mother called "All-

"auspicious" with so much hope and happiness. As a matter of fact, this universe of ours is, as very wisely and sadly pointed out by our well-meaning saints and sages, full of sins and sorrows, impurities and imperfections, defects and delusions, and what not! So, how can the Divine Mother, the Supreme Creator of this vast and variegated universe of ours, be called an "All-auspicious" Being bringing good to all?

The reply to this very natural query is that, though apparently an abode of infinite and sufferings of all kinds whatsoever, and as such rejectible totally from the spiritualistic point of view, yet, the world too, has its own value, its own necessity, its own urgency; and this has reference to the Great Law of Karma, which forms the very basis of our age-old Indian culture and civilisation.

Now, what does this fundamental law of Karma imply? Very briefly, it implies that every agent is fully responsible for his voluntary acts, done by him freely and rationally, after due deliberation and free choice of means and end; and, so according to all canons of Justice, he and he alone has to experience the fruits thereof. But, as a man does numerous such voluntary acts in course of a birth, he has to be born again for experiencing the appropriate results of his past unexperienced voluntary acts. In this new birth, if he does the above, i.e., duly experiences the just fruits (Karma-phalas) of his own voluntary acts (Sakama-Karmas); but also does the new acts in a wholly Niskama or unselfish spirit, without any desire for the results thereof; and performs the Sadhanas, or follows the spiritual path properly, then he is sure to attain salvation (Moksha or Mukti), the only goal of life.

Hence, the world, too, though wholly rejectible at the end, yet serves of supreme, sublime, superb purpose in the beginning, namely attainment of Moksha, or Salvation.

That is why, the Divine Mother, the Creatures, in Her infinite mercy and grace, creates the world anew for giving the blind, erring, desire-laden, mundane-minded individual souls one more great opportunity to start a new on the straight and narrow Path to Salvation.

Hence, this benign and becoming, this beautiful and blissful Divine Act of Creation is neither an unjust, nor an unkind one. Rather, the Universal Mother Creates this Universe of Souls and matter according to their past "Sakama-Karmas" or voluntary acts; and then leaves them there to work out their own destinies, according to their inclinations and powers, as early as possible.

Hence it is that Divine Mother is an "All-auspicious" Being, bringing eternal, infinite joy and fulfilment to all. If, of course, a "Jiva", in his colossal ignorance, and in his still more colossal worldly-mindedness, totally misuses this magnificent chance, then, there is no hope for him; but how can you blame the Divine Creatress for that?

Thus, the Universal Mother is, undoubtedly, "Sarva-Mangala-Mayi", an All-auspicious Being from all points of view. For, even after creating us, She is always with us, like our very own Mother, helping, guiding, encouraging us all always. For, She is not a transcendent, external Creator; but wholly an immanent Deity, who lovingly lights up the extinguished lamps of our lives; reverberates around the silent harps of our hearts; fills up the empty vessels of our souls, blooms for the dry lotuses of our lives inside; and outside, smiles forth in blooming flowers, shines forth in the Sun and the moon sing forth in the sweet songs of chirruping birds; blows forth in cool winds; flows forth in the dancing rivers. It is She, She, She alone who is everywhere, eternally in every nook and corner, inside and outside. Is not that a very auspicious thing to do, a gracious thing to do, a very joyous thing to do?

The all-auspiciousness of the Divine Mother also implies another thing—that She is not only "Sristi Kartri", or Creatress of the Universe of souls and Matter; but also, Mukti-datri, or Bestower of Salvation. As in the case of Creation, although Creation is really according to the past Karmas of the individual souls, yet the Divine Mother is the Creatress; so here, too, although Salvation is according to the present Sadharas of the individual souls, yet the Divine Mother is the Bestower of Salvation. In both cases, she brings supreme happiness and auspiciousness to all—in the first case, as giving them an opportunity, a foothold, a forum for working out their own Salvation; in the second, as actually enabling them to have Salvation.

Such is our Divine Mother, our very own, our very near and dear, our very loving and gracious Mother. Her very name is supremely auspicious: "Durga", meaning two things "Durgama" and "Durgati-Nasini", one who is very difficult to attain. Yet, one who always destroys all our distresses, difficulties and defects fully. She is so very difficult to attain because of our own faults, because of our own delusions and illusions; yet She is our eternal helper and guide, because She is, after all, our very own Mother; and, this is Her final and fundamental form to us—So let us stand there, above all logical argumentations, above all philosophical subtleties, above all hair-splitting and hair-raising discourse, and let us, giving up everything else, chant Her Holy Name, Sweet Name, Lovable Name, to the end of our lives, with our every breath, with our every heart-beat, with our every thought—

*"Ya Devi Sarvabhutesu Matrirupena
Samsthita
Namastasyai Namastasyai Namastasyai
Namo Namah"*

(Sri Sri Ciandi 5. 73)

*"The Goddess who is present in all,
In the form of Mother Divine,
Obeisance to Her, obeisance to Her,
Obeisance to Her, Mother Benign".
(Sri Sri Ciandi 5. 73)*

the economic scene in india

srikumar banerjee



T the present moment economic prospects in India, never very clear and hopeful, have assumed a markedly enigmatic complexion. The hidden difference of opinion inside the ruling party about the soundest financial policy for the country has exploded into an open rupture that threatens the disintegration and a decisive parting of the ways between the exponents of the divergent schools of thought. The situation has been further complicated by the interaction between principles and the personalities that poses a tangle well nigh impossible to resolve. The time has now arrived even for laymen to face the issues squarely and without any doctrinaire involvements into which specialists are peculiarly liable to run.

Indian economics ever since independence has been preponderantly theory-ridden without the much needed corrective of verification through actual results. We have looked at the scene complacently half-blinded by the blinkers of economic theory and have trodden the perilous path to the brink of the abyss without minding the warnings of facts and the growing cleavage between theory and practice. We have cherished the illusion of economics being an exact and universal science with rules holding valid for all times and for all parts of the world.

We have not made sufficient allowance for the variability of the factor which finally determines results. As in the case of form of administration, so in the field of financial regulation we have too readily assumed that democracy and nationalisation owe panaceas which demand our implicit homage. As a general guideline they are certainly the best calculated to promote the public good. But the limit of our surrender to these wholesome principles will have to be ultimately fixed by the verdict of the highest court of appeal, the supreme court of experience and the tribunal of achieved results. In politics and finance there is no principle which admits of being blindly followed. At every step their directives are to be checked and supplemented by a careful watching of effects. Democracy is, however, apt to fritter away most of its benefits through an indifferent electorate, which contents itself with registering its preferences at stated intervals, but is too lazy and apathetic in closely following the actual detailed working and is lacking in enough public spirit to keep up a perpetual safeguarding vigilance. Nationalization is, in the same way, a sleeping draught for people lacking in initiative and it breeds a habit of total dependence on the state for satisfying all its needs, and like a Roman mob is helplessly dependent on food doles and on slave labour. It loses whatever enterprising spirit it might have had, and develops the passive habits of getting its wants done for it by some external agency

—either the state or any self-governing body or even by authorities created at the lowest village level. Democracy and nationalization will, therefore, operate as the twin prongs of a pincer movement that will squeeze out and dry up the very limited reserve of elasticity yet left in the people's will and will make it purely mechanical in its working.

Democracy and nationalisation have been co-operating during the two decades of independent India toward these freezing and paralysing effects. Democracy in Government has till now created party caucuses, which had united in capturing power for the party at the expense of the common people and have abused the engines of power for despoiling masses in order to add disproportionate strength to the party bosses and their favourites and agents. After 21 years of corrupt administration the people developed sufficient energy of hatred to throw off the yoke of their former masters. They have transferred their allegiance to a loose conglomeration of a host of extreme leftist parties with a suspicious readiness that augurs little hope of their power and will to probe into their real weaknesses and avoid a repetition of their past errors. Without a moment's thought they have shifted their pathetic faith in their new master and have shown themselves equally gullible to facile promises blind to the chances of their possible fulfilment. When paradise is dangled before their eyes, they clutch at the illusory gift, though hell has yawned its gaping jaws right in front of them. Such blindness to reality is the greatest damper to any hope of progress.

However, I do not dwell upon the political situation, though it looks ominous enough. After all political mischief is ephemeral in its effects and its damages can be repaired by a return of good sense and sanity among the ruling hierarchy. It is their own interest, even if it may not be their genuine desire to do good to the people committed to their charge, that may supply the incentive to a quick, even radical change of policy. But much more concern is demanded by the handling of the economic situation which leaves a trail of a more irreparable devastation. An unrealistic financial policy breeds false hopes and a chronic parasitic spirit. It makes people more impervious to the need of grappling basic issues and of coming to grips with reality. Such a temper of the people poses a problem of an almost incurable malady.

Nationalisation, as an industrial policy, has as yet yielded little fruitful results. Excepting in the solitary case of life insurance, the replacement of private enterprise by Government management has almost invariably promoted extravagance and irresponsibility. The pattern of bureaucratic machinery has everywhere blunted initiative and ad-

versely affected that sensitive watchfulness of a fluctuating market, that adaptability to changing conditions so vital to the success of a commercial venture. Fairly secure salary scales and compartmentalization of red tape responsibility are not calculated to evoke resourcefulness in meeting a critical situation, nor do they promote intimate contact with the world of business fed by diverse currents from the growers' and consumers' world. Such bureaucrats do not explore all possible avenues for gleaning essential information. They do not face and interrogate the producing sector but expect to have ready made conclusions supplied to them to various subordinate channels. For them the business world is a neatly dossiered compilation of files passed on to them for their signature. In life insurance alone the business has expanded since the take over, mainly because of the initial reluctance to insure has been overcome through experience of customers and through an improved method of propaganda largely due to a greater outlay on the required agency.

But the other industrial concerns for steel and power, though backed by colossal investments have had an almost disastrous ending. Every report of the Estimates Committee of Parliament has underlined the huge waste partly due to inexperience but mostly to be traced to improvidence and even more serious lapses. In spite of these damaging disclosures the Government has taken but little effective measures to set things right, because it knew what things to do and was to some extent influenced by the unworthy motive of shielding partisans and personal favourites. Nor has the fabulously big sums sanctioned for refugee rehabilitation have reached anywhere near its expected targets. Officialdom has played drakes and ducks with this money earmarked for a sacred mission so that refugees remain where they were and constitute a race of wandering Ishmaelites who have not found a permanent home anywhere. They are a perpetual source of worry to the authorities and a ready tool to be exploited by all disruptive elements, being a sort of nomadic fringe amidst a precariously settled and ever discontented set of residents. With that colossal blunder if not crime, staring us on the face how can we pin our faith in state control, however plausible it may appear theoretically? The state must show itself worthy of our unqualified confidence before it can claim it as their due. We cannot afford to stake our all on a mere a priori theory unconfirmed by the testimony of facts.

But even if we exclude the melancholy history of our past misadventures, the very basic issues that underlie our present industrial policy require a rethinking in the light of present development. The moral right of the Government to intervene in laying down the policy of private sector undertakings is in the wider interest of the nation. State support, whether direct or indirect, can only be claimed to improve the living condition of the people as a whole. If the distribution of profits between capital and labour is conceded as a right to be exercised by the State, it is with the primary object of ensuring the benefits of an efficient production organisation amongst the entire community and holding the balance even between management and workers is but the first step towards such an end. The Government today seems committed to the narrow view that it is entirely a bipartite matter, between employees and employers and that the general consumers has no say in it. This is to look at the question from a narrow and perhaps distorted angle. If the Government pro-labour policy has a wide popular support, it is only because labour is in the picture as a representative of the common

man. Otherwise if it were a mere competition between the two component elements of a productive concern, the parties might have been left to fight it out among themselves, with no wider issues involved.

It is the concern for the public interest beyond the scope of the contending parties that lends its moral sanction to the Government intervention. If this theory is accepted, it at once imparts a new dimension to the pro-labour policy of Government and shifts the primary to the safeguarding of the efficient conduct of business for the national interest. It forms the raison d'être of Government direction to resist all extravagant demands on either side as calculated to undermine the potentialities of the concern itself, which must be given full scope for proper development to meet the consumers' increasing demand and to cope with mounting world-competition. Any arrangement that militates against this progressive growth must be deemed immoral and improvident and stigmatised as a betrayal of the sacred trust. Every demand for additional profits or increased wages must be strictly judged by this standard and conceded or withheld as affecting the future of the trade. In Government offices and railways to increase dearness allowances and scales of pay can only be justified if it does not impose additional burdens upon the common people. Why should an average tax-payer be mulcted for more liberal concessions and pay more for Railway fares and freights when his general income compares very unfavourably with that of a Government employee? But what happens is that the pressure tactics of organised employees' unions and perhaps the need of appeasement, coupled with the vociferous support of all members of the Legislature elected even from rural constituencies make the surrender to those demands imperative, and the disorganised murmurs of the people on whom the real burden falls make no more impact than the whisperings of a mild breeze. Once only during all these agitated years did Mrs. Indira Gandhi make a passing reference to the plight of the unemployed rural worker as deserving of more sympathy than the other twists of the urban and industrial unions of unappeasable hunger and the craving for more and more emoluments.

The bona fides of the Government can only be established beyond cavil, if profits of trade and commerce are ploughed back into the undertakings for purposes of expansion according to the increasing tempo of unemployment instead of being frittered away to swell the bank-balance of organisers and the ever-mounting demands of workers. The continuously swelling figures of wages and dearness allowances should not entail any additional burden upon the poor consumers or the general economic stringency in the country. Unfortunately, the Government has shown itself totally unable to arrest the rising spiral of the minimum cost of living in the same proportion as they are ready to succumb to organised agitation. While yielding to pressure tactics, it is singularly incapable of stabilising the price structure and of ensuring minimum outturn of the part of every individual worker, so as to maintain a just balance between cost and return. After all, no business can run on a footing of charity but must follow sound economic principles. While the are very eager to impose a ceiling on the profits of self-acquired wealth, towards which they made a contribution, they fight shy of a more essential obligation to fix a ceiling on productivity as a counterweight to the bill on wages and cost of production. There has been no attempt to fix the maxi-

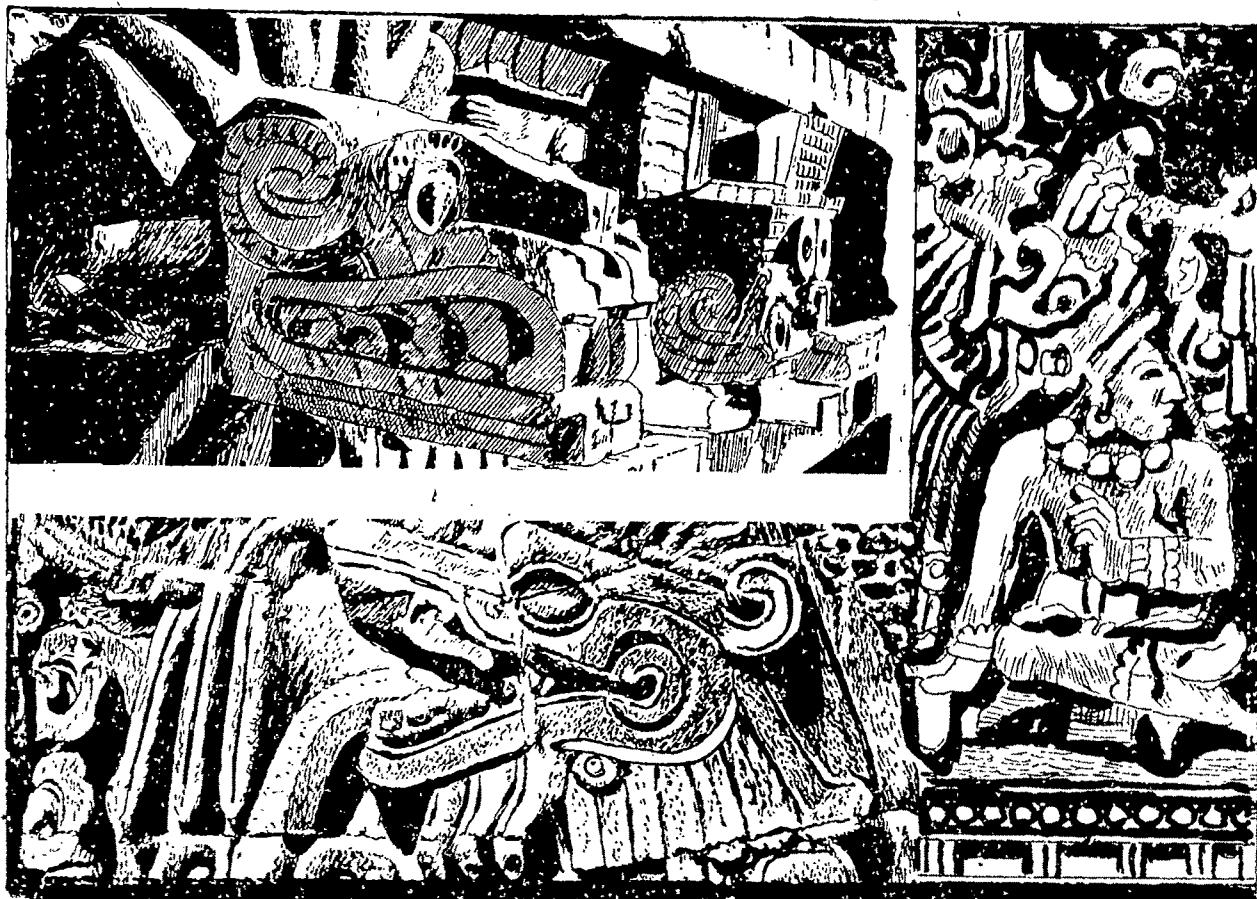
mum limit of the charge on establishment in relation to its essential service to the public. An authoritative spokesman of the Calcutta Corporation gave the information that 75 p.c. of the Corporation income was exhausted in meeting establishment charges, having only a beggarly residue of 25 p.c. to offer amenities to ratepayers. This may be more or less true of other municipalities, very few of which are in a position to offer reasonable service to the ratepayers, with the result that all self-governing institutions are looked upon as a nuisance, a crushing burden which all would like to throw off. And the State Government goes on subsidising all these incompetent and corrupt bodies and sanctions an increase of taxes to keep them alive only for the sake of the members and employees. A self-governing body has in the people's mind been identified with an instrument for unchecked waste and corruption. All these subsidies in effect hang like millstones round the neck of a sinking body, which goes deeper into the water in its effort to rescue others who have just managed to draw breath through such misplaced charity. The sooner the position is reviewed and the pathetic round of this public help is stopped, the better for all concerned. After all, life is a stern task master, who hardly offers a scope for such reprieves and make-shifts. The total result of such well-meant, though practically nugatory, policies has boiled down to a close approximation to the proverbial injustice of robbing the totally destitute Paul to pay a much better-off Peter. The under-dog in whose interest the whole policy is designed yields precedence to the middle-dog who in reality monopolises all the benefit.

This disastrous policy does not remain confined only to the sphere of trade and commerce, but has spilled over into all cultural and academic spheres which are the furthest removed from the profit-making motive. The cry of being paid at Central Government rates has been repeated at the State level in utter disregard of the huge disparity of resources between the two authorities. On the theoretical basis of the equality of the needs of every section of society equal payment is demanded irrespective of the capacity of the employer to pay at the same rate. Everywhere the demand is enforced by the threat of strike and precipitating a crisis in all departments of life. While State Governments readily yield to these demands, and announce an all-round rise in wages even with an empty exchequer and in utter heedlessness to the warnings of the Centre not to foot the bill, inopportune demands are made on the Centre, and grievance whipped up against it leading to a weakening of the bonds of integration. Some States may have a reasonable grievance against the Centre for inequitable distribution from the divisible pool, but that is a separate issue to be fought out on its own. What is of much more importance is not adequacy of Central contribution as the habit of prudent and provident disposition of ways and means and teaching the people to face the reality of the situation. This frugality and living within one's means, if inculcated in the people, will be a more abiding asset for the future and will outweigh all shocks of temporary disappointment among the workers.

For after all the fluctuations in the fortunes of political parties, the thing of permanent value is to safeguard the future of democracy, which at present shows serious cracks not only on the surface but in its inner temper and attitude to life. The real moral quality of a nation is determined not by the form of Government it professes to follow, but by its response to challenges from its actual working, the stresses which develop from day-to-day administra-

tion. At present all the symptoms point to the fact that we are fast losing our hold on the democratic way of life which is virtually different from paying lip-homage to a democratic constitution. The essence of democracy lies in accepting the rule of the majority, in adopting only constitutional methods of agitation and waiting in patience for a turn in the tide of public opinion. Any direct form of opposition, which amounts to taking the law into one's own hands and makes ourselves the judges of the justice of our cause, under however specious names it might be designated is a negation of democracy. No political party at present can claim total exemption from this intolerance and forcing other peoples' will by pressure-tactics. Even the Gandhite Congress has developed this spirit of fighting with the weapons of intrigue and self-will, if they have kept aloof from fighting with lethal weapons. The Congress High Command has just now exhibited a sorry specimen of inner feuds and a strategy of manoeuvres and counter manoeuvres. Neither of the two dissenting divisions can claim to have entered the fray with a perfectly clean soul. In the Congress State of Andhra, without entering into the merits of a separate Telangana, it can confidently be asserted that both parties have subordinated wider national good to narrow parochial issues and have developed an incurable antipathy to a peaceful coexistence rendered honourable by an impartial settlement of the points of dispute. To a real democrat even an unfair arbitration is more acceptable than a secession which threatens disintegration. The boundary dispute between Maharashtra and Mysore, to take another example from Congress States, is continuing as a running sore which not even an unauthorized arbitration award can heal. It can be asked in all humility where this process is going to end. The next step would in all probability be to whip up parochial passions by a fast unto-death glorified under the name of martyr's self-immolation—and inverted martyrdom that will result in the dismemberment of India. Everywhere is discernible the sad perversion of apparently worthy means to serve unworthy ends.

Now to sum up in conclusion. The most important climate for the recovery of economic and cultural prosperity is a stability of atmosphere and the restoration of confidence in the mind of workers and investors. A perpetual state of disturbance and lawlessness, however plausibly explained, will go but little to reassure scared enterprise. The government which is under a constant obligation to explain and exonerate, may win a dialectic victory, but only at the cost of its more vital, ultimate objective. The magical recovery of twice-devastated Germany and Japan was not signalled by barren deployment of arguments, but only by the assertion of the national will to survive and recuperate. We, in India know these as facts but are ignorant of the secret by which the leader stimulated the national will and sustained it through years of hard unexciting work. It was not certainly by slogan-shouting, by colourful, flag-waving road-blocking processions, by emphasising that our demands must be met, no matter from where, by whipping up a stream of vague discontent which uses up all our steadiness and will for work that the goal in other war-torn countries was reached. If normal life is paralysed by this frothy excitement, then no amount of bounty will fill up the vacuum. If India nurses the seeds of autocracy, while living in the framework of democracy, she will have the worst of both the worlds. It is up to the leaders to train the people along sound lines, instead of feeding them with illusory hopes for the sake of a cheap short-lived popularity.



Here is Universalism of India

*DR. SUNITI KUMAR CHATTERJI
revaluates the PLUMED SERPENT
of D. H. LAWRENCE*





THE "Plumed Serpent" of D. H. Lawrence is a modern English novel, which was written in 1923-24 and first published in 1926. It is a work remarkable in many ways. It is important in the first instance as a powerful work of fiction in which the author, with the background of Mexico of the early twenties of this century, gives a remarkable study of the relations between man and woman. The book is paradoxical in many ways. In spite of a certain amount of what would appear to be just sentimentalising and philosophising in a rather incomprehensible mystic vein, it is nevertheless quite profound in its appraisal of some of the fundamentals of life. D. H. Lawrence has very skilfully interwoven his characterisation of the men and women of his story with some recent ideological movements of a rather revolutionary character which were noticeable in Mexico after the throes of the revolution bringing in the emancipation of the Mexican masses of a pure American Indian origin which followed the overthrow of the Diaz regime in 1911, so disastrous for the economic and cultural well-being of these masses.

The story is very simple, although the psychological implications are both complicated and profound. An Irish woman of 40, who was divorced from her first husband, the father of her two children now grown up and living apart, and was married for the second time to a political worker from Ireland, had become a widow after some years of happy married life with her second husband. She had the typical character of a modern woman of her position. There was a vague sense of dissatisfaction with life which new sights and scenes in an exotic Mexican could not remove. She had a vague yearning for a fuller life where she would find the complete meaning and fulfilment of mundane existence. Within the exotic atmosphere of Mexico, she found a sort of subdued conflict between two main worlds of ideas and of life. On the one hand there was the sophisticated Creole life of the ruling and intellectual classes of Spanish origin with its satellite the *petit bourgeois* life of the Mestizos of mixed Spanish and Indian origin, and on the other there was the rich, strong, primitive life of the masses of American-Indian origin, the descendants of the Aztecs, the Zapotecs, the Tarascans, the Mixtecs, the Malyas, and other peoples or tribes of ancient Mexico. These last were only superficially affiliated to the culture of the Spanish conqueror. Their Christianity was only skin-deep. Below the surface, the pre-Columbian mentality of the ancient peoples of Mexico was still operative. In spite of 400 years of Spanish occupation and imposition of Roman Catholic Christianity, coupled with a considerable amount of miscegenation with ruling Spaniards, the people of Mexico still retain a good deal of the economic and mental atmosphere of the pre-Columbian times.

The gods were becoming popular once again—if only as symbols of a renewed pride in the national history and national culture. The swing of the pendulum in favour of revivalism had gone so far that the Mexican Minister for Education, some two decades ago gave a direction to all schools that the children were to be told that it was not Santa Claus, or Saint Nicolaus, who came from Europe as a part of the new Christian mythology but the Mexican god Quetzalcoatl who came down from

heaven on Christmas eve and filled the stockings of children placed on their bed-heads with Christmas presents. The mix up of the totally different mythologies of two distinct religions is rather bizarre and disturbing two for, some, but nevertheless it is symptomatic of the situation.

To come back to Lawrence's novel. Our heroine, Kate Leslie, went to see a bull-fight in Mexico city with two American friends. Disgusted with what she saw there, she was leaving the place, but was caught by rain. There she made the acquaintance of Don Cipriano Viedma, a general in the Mexican Army supporting the new President. The acquaintance became closer, and she came to know the set to which Don Cipriano belonged—most prominent of which was Don Ramon Carrasco, a historian and archaeologist. These two men then came into her life, and the rest of the story, some 400 pages out of 460, deals with the strange situation and the weird predicaments in which she gradually found herself.

Don Cipriano was a Mexican of pure Indian origin, and Don Ramon was almost pure Spanish. But Don Ramon was slowly starting a movement which was making use of the latent pure Mexican (that is pre-Spanish and Amerindian) aspirations and patriotism of the masses for spiritual and economic emancipation from the Spanish and Roman Catholic suppression or the American Indian life and spiritual background during four centuries. Although of Spanish origin himself, Don Ramon of D. H. Lawrence's story, like some of the actual leaders of the Indian Renaissance in Mexico, had built up a new philosophy and a *Weltanschauung* based on ancient Mexican mythology and ideologies as well as upon an exceedingly modern outlook. Working among the Indian masses living in and around his estate he had started a strong national movement, a movement filled with both hope for a better life and prospect of drawing out the best in them on the basis of their own pre-Christian Mexican heritage. To this a large number of Indians gave their willing allegiance. Half fascinated and half repelled by this movement, Kate Leslie, without being aware of it, became thoroughly mixed up with it, and could not but feel drawn by the aspect of primitive grandeur in some of the conceptions of a revived (and modernised) Mexican religion. Don Ramon had come in conflict with his wife, a lady of deep faith in the Roman Catholic religion who did not approve of her husband's dangerous experiments with the revival of heathenism. This finally led to a complete estrangement between husband and wife, and to the ultimate death of the wife through a broken heart, when Don Ramon formally abandoned the paraphernalia and ideology of Roman Catholic faith and adopted and established that of a revived cult of Quetzalcoatl or "the Plumed Serpent", one of the most remarkable gods of the ancient Mexicans. Don Cipriano was the strong and effective executive hand of the movement as Don Ramon was its brain and its heart. The revivalists succeeded in giving a fresh impetus and a new life and meaning to the old Indian religious dances, music and ritual, and the masses were persuaded that the Roman Catholic gods whom they were worshipping in the churches so long—Christ, the Virgin, and the various saints—had found out that they had no more work to do in Mexico—they were leaving the country, giving place to the old gods. The old Christian

churches, cleared of the Catholic images, symbols and appurtenances, were to be converted into the temples of the Mexican gods, with their own symbols and images and ritual of worship. Don Ramon instituted a new and impressive ceremonial linked up with that of pre-Christian Mexico, which also cast its spell on Kate Leslie. The Roman Catholic Church in a small town near to his estate was formally cleared of its images, which were taken to a neighbouring island and there burnt with great ceremony, and an image of the Quetzalcoatl or the Plumed Serpent was set up there. Enthusiasts for this revived faith were not lacking, including some Catholic priests who came over to the new or revived religion, and the ideology behind it began to spread far and wide, aided both by Don Ramon's intellectual propaganda and Don Cipriano's successful propagation of it through the army under his command—the soldiers themselves being mostly Indians.

Ultimately Don Ramon assumed the role of a sort of vicar or incarnation of Quetzalcoatl, and later on Don Cipriano also assumed the god as representing Huitzilopochtli, the God of War. Meanwhile Kate Leslie was feeling a strange attraction in spite of a basic repulsion her European nature could not avoid, to all these exotic ideologies, intricately mixed up as they became with the deeper cravings of her unsatisfied soul. Don Cipriano, several years her junior, exerted a strange power over her mind. Finally she was married to Don Cipriano by Don Ramon herself assuming the role of Malintzi, the divine wife of Huitzilopochtli. After his wife's death, Don Ramon married a young Mexican heiress, who fully identified herself with her husband's ideology. Kate Leslie wanted to get away from Mexico back to Ireland, but finally she remained in Mexico with Don Cipriano.

I confess I am not impressed by or interested in the poetic philosophy that Lawrence has put in the mouth of Don Ramon. The "revived" ritual which Don Ramon seeks to establish is of course born out of the mind of Lawrence, and all this may have an artistic value in the unfoldment of the plot, but for one interested in actualities these are just curious and unmeaning. For an objective study of the Indian Renaissance in Mexico, with its strange combination of intellectual and artistic talent and genius of both the white men and the red I would look elsewhere.

But one thing interests me, as a modern man who also feels a strengthening of his modernity through his Indian heritage. In the desire to understand the American Indian mentality that gave to the world the religions and the gods of ancient Mexico which went hand in hand with the Indian Renaissance, I see an attitude which we understand most naturally in India. This attitude is in eternal conflict with unthinking bigotry and exclusiveness. It is based on the feeling expressed so finely by the Latin poet Terence of the 2nd century B.C.: *homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto* (I am a man, and do not consider anything human as foreign to me). In India we have expressed the same idea in a different way: *udaracaritanan tu vasudhaiva kutumbakam* (For those who are liberal in their actions, the whole world is kin). The orthodox Roman Catholics did not, and could not understand the religious life of the Mexicans, certain aspects of which like human sacrifice naturally repelled them—although they had their own Inquisition involving still more cruel human sacrifice.

The name Quetzalcoatl means 'Feathered Serpent,—a word which might be rendered into Sans-

krit as *Patatri-naga*, *Patri-naga* or *Pakshi-naga*; his symbol, a serpent with the feathers of the gay quetzal bird, stood for the divinity that soars in the sky like the bird, and goes deep down into the bosom of the earth like the snake. He was a beneficent god, to whom alone of Aztec deities no human sacrifices were offered, and he was like Vishnu in the Indian pantheon. So *Tezcatlipoca* (the name signifies 'Flaming Mirror' or 'Smoking Mirror', or 'Fire-Stone') we may translate into Sanskrit as *Jvaladadarsa* or *Jvalan-mukura Agny-asman*—he was a god with a cosmic significance comparable to our Indian Shiva. The Indian renaissance in Mexico brought back the memory of these gods; and the beauty and greatness of their conceptions were sought to help beautify and ennoble the life of the present-day Mexicans.

RELIGIOUS CONFLICT

Naturally, such an attempt would be looked upon with disfavour by orthodox Christianity, and this aspect of the Indian Renaissance placed it in sharp conflict with the Roman Catholic Church organisation. The priests in many places incited the believing or superstitious Christian masses to rebel against the State in the name of Christ. But ultimately the Church was defeated and liquidated as a state or public institution. The Church and Orthodoxy were incapable of understanding a federation of different religions as diverse expressions of the same spiritual aspiration of man; and this was one of the main pivots in Don Ramon's programme in staging a return of the Mexican gods.

Herein, we may pertinently ask if Lawrence, like many other writers of the present age, had not unconsciously or indirectly imbibed the leaven of Indianism which is now to be reckoned as one of the influences in modern thought. Ever since Swami Vivekananda declared at the World Congress of Religions in Chicago in 1893 that all religions were complimentary to each other and were but different instruments in a great symphony which found its fullest expression in the Indian philosophy of the Vedanta, the intellectual elite of the world were gradually being drawn to the appreciation of the position;—in fact, to the formulation of a *Perennial Philosophy or Religion*, as Aldous Huxley has recently called it (evidently translating the Sanskrit phrase *Sunatana Dharma*). In Lawrence's book, we find Don Ramon expressing his own views when he went to see the Roman Catholic Bishop who was opposing his movement. The Bishop knew that the Church was not popular, and the Government was not only not neutral but sympathetic towards the Mexican religious revivalism. A fragment of the conversation between Don Ramon and the bishop, is interesting.

"Your Church is the Catholic Church, Father?"
"Surely!" said the Bishop.

"And Catholic Church means the Church of All, the Universal Church?"

"Surely, son of mine".

"Then why not let it be really Catholic? Why call it catholic, when it is not only just one among many churches, but is even hostile to all the rest of the churches? Father, why not let the catholic church become really the Universal Church?"

"It is the Universal Catholic Church of Christ, my son".

"Why not let it be the Universal Church of Mohammad as well, since ultimately, God is one God, but the peoples speak varying languages, and each needs its own prophet to speak with its own tongue. The Universal Church of Christ, and Mohammad, and Buddha, and

Quetzalcoatl, and all others—that would be a Catholic Church, Father".

"You speak of things beyond me", said the Bishop, turning his ring.

"Not beyond any man", said Don Ramon. "A Catholic Church is a Church of all the religions, a home on earth for all the prophets and the Christs a big tree under which every man who acknowledges the greater life of the soul can sit and be refreshed. Isn't 'that' the Catholic Church, Father?"

'Alas, my son, I know the Apostolic Church of Christ in Rome, of which I am humble servant. I do not understand the clever things you are saying to me.'

"I am asking for peace, Father. I am not one who hates the Church of Christ, the Roman Catholic Church. But in Mexico I think it has no place. When my heart is not bitter. I am grateful forever to Christ, the Son of God. . . ."

INDIAN INFLUENCE

Here Lawrence speaks in the same vein in which the great Indian leaders have been speaking all through history. Swami Vivekananda himself said that different religions are like different languages. There is no evidence of Lawrence having read the discourses of Swami Vivekananda, but it is remarkable that he would be putting the same idea in the mouth of Don Ramon.

On another occasion, another character in Lawrence's book speaks in this vein. He was of Don Ramon's group, and racially he described himself as having French Spanish, Austrian and American Indian blood in him. He says :

"But if you like the 'word' Quetzalcoatl, don't you think it would be wonderful if he came back again? Ah, the 'names' of the gods! Don't you think the 'names' are like seeds, so full of magic, of the unexplored magic? Huitzilopochtli—how wonderful! And Tlaloc! Ah, I love them! I say them over and over, like they say 'Mani padme Om!' in Tibet. I believe in the fertility of the sound. 'Itzpapalotl'—the Obsidian Butterfly! Itzpapalotl! But say it, and you will see it does good to your soul. Itzpapalotl! Tezcatlipoca! They were old when the Spaniards came, they needed the bath of life again. But now rebathed in youth, how wonderful they must be: Think of Jehovah! Jehovah! Think of Jesus Christ! How thin and poor they sound! or Jesus Cristo! They are dead, names, all the life withered out of them. . . ."

Here we have a well-known idea of medieval Brahmanism—the Power of the Name, and the mystic Bija or "Seed-name", the repetition of which ten or one hundred and eight or a thousand or a hundred thousand times gets into the mind of the devotee through a sort of self-hypnotism the power to come closer to realise in himself the Idea of the Divinity he is concentrating upon. But it is remarkable, where did Lawrence get it? I do not want to suggest that it was Indianism which began to have its appeal in the west from the early part of the 19th century that gave the direct idea or inspiration of Lawrence. Since Schopenhauer and Deussen, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Annie Besant, right down to Romain Rolland, Aldous Huxley and Somerset Maugham, Indianism has been working on some of the best minds of the west as a silent force. It preached something which Humanity has all along wanted. The most liberal spirits among men have always invoked it in their life and work. It was latent in the world, and Swami Vivekananda and the rest gave it a name and a shape and proclaimed its inevitability, as a clarion call and as a challenge to exclusive religions. The idea is universal; but if this much is claimed for India, that in her philo-

sophy and in her life India has underlined it more strongly than in many other parts of the world, I think it will not be regarded as too high a claim.

Hence, in the psychological novel of D. H. Lawrence, which brings in and solves a problem in the colourful atmosphere of the American Indian Renaissance of Mexico, we have the spectacle of what appears to be a definite contribution of Indianism to the modern religious thought. It is a force which seems to come naturally to the promulgators of Mexican revivalism *vis-a-vis* an orthodox and intolerant form of faith which just will not live and let live because it is incapable of understanding.





ANDHIJI is too near us in time to enable us to judge him from the perspective of history and human thought.

If one decides to stand up for the truth as one sees it and backs it up with one's life, one must also accept the limitations of non-violence and abjure the use of brute force. If this is done, the technique acquires a new edge and a fresh meaning.

The use of satyagraha carries with it many and varied implications. The man who adopts the weapon has to direct it against the evil, not the evildoer, a very difficult thing to do without a continuous process of self-purification.

At the same time, he has to see that it does not inflict violence on the other side, but is content to invite suffering on himself. Suffering, deliberately invited, in support of a cause which one considers righteous, naturally purges the mind of the satyagrahi of ill-will and removes the element of bitterness from the antagonist.

The efficacy of satyagraha depends upon the tenacity to resist evil which, while it abjures force, develops in the satyagrahi the faculty to face all risks cheerfully. Thus, the emphasis is transferred from aggression by force to resistance by tenacity. It is only when these requirements are met that non-violent satyagraha becomes a mighty weapon of resistance both in the struggle for freedom as well as in self-realisation. The results are reached by slow degrees, it is true, but the resultant bitterness is short-lived.

comes to a satyagrahi when he acquires the faith that the cause he fights for is God-given.

This aspect of satyagraha was thus expressed by Gandhiji:

"But who am I? I have no strength save what God gives me. I have no authority over my countrymen save the purely moral. If He holds me to be a sure instrument for the spread of non-violence in place of the awful violence now ruling the earth, He will give me the strength and show me the way.

My greatest weapon is mute prayer. The cause of peace is, therefore, in God's good hands. Nothing can happen but His will expressed in His eternal, changeless Law which is He."

"God is a living presence to me. I am surer of His existence than of the fact that you and I are sitting in this room. I may live without air and water but not without Him."

"You may pluck out my eyes, but that cannot kill me. But blast my belief in God and I am dead."

"Whatever striking things I have done in life, I have not done prompted by reason but by instinct, I would say, God."

Gandhiji had none of the sanctions which position, power and wealth give; the only sanction he possessed proceeded from his nearness to God. It is this which gave him an authority over the hearts of men, an authority which was spiritual and moral.

To a world dominated by what Aldous Huxley calls "the false doctrine of totalitarian anthropocentrism and the pernicious ideas and practices of na-

Gandhiji: Spirituality in Action

K. M. MUNSHI

Satyagraha in some form or the other was adopted by various sets of people at different times in history. But it was left to Gandhi to perfect the technique by which mass resistance could succeed in achieving enduring results without resorting to force and without leaving a legacy of bitterness behind. The technique acquires great importance in the modern world when instruments of coercion and destruction are concentrated in the hands of a few rulers in every country. Those who serve the cause of freedom or collective welfare have no other efficacious weapon left except satyagraha. We see this illustrated in the satyagraha offered by the Negroes in U.S.A.

Satyagraha as a social force is not a negative creed of the pacifists, a pious wish, a faith devoid of passion. It is an activity resulting from an effective will to vindicate the supremacy of the Moral Order. In the hour of danger, it demands the highest form of heroism as well as self-control.

Satyagraha, as Gandhi often said, is a weapon of the strong, not a cover for the cowardice of the weak. As he himself recognised, in the practical affairs of men there may be occasions when non-violence may have to be tempered with the defensive use of violence.

Non-violence is absolute in principle; but on occasions, as the one which presented itself to Arjuna in the *Bhagavad-Gita*, it has to be a mental attitude, not an absolute refusal to resist violence by violent methods.

The power of satyagraha lies in the satyagrahi's firm determination to uphold his truth at the cost of his life in a spirit of humility. This power only

tionalistic pseudo-mysticism," Gandhi gave a new technique of spirituality in action.

Gandhiji was a unique blend of a mystic, apostle and prophet, and the purpose of all his activities, his ultimate aim in life, was to see God 'face to face'. Said he:

"What I want to achieve, what I have been striving and pining to achieve these thirty years is self-realisation, to see God face to face, to attain moksha... All that I do by way of speaking and writing, and all my ventures in the political field are directed to this same end."

(Italics are mine)

And at times he did come "face to face", as when he entered upon his 21-days' self-purificatory fast in December 1942 in Aga Khan Palace, Poona, which ended in his release on the sixth or seventh day when he had almost reached death's door.

At another place, he elaborates the implications of seeing God 'face to face':

"To see the universal and all-pervading Spirit of Truth face to face, one must be able to love the meanest of creation as oneself. And a man who aspires after that cannot afford to keep out of any field of life (including politics). At the time of his last fast in Delhi, he said:

"With God as my supreme and sole counsellor, I felt that I must take the decision without any other advisers."

"Who am I?" Gandhi asked and replied: "I have no strength save what God gives me. The cause of peace, for that matter everything else, is in the good hands of God. Nothing can happen but His will expressed in His eternal changeless Law which is He."

RAILWAY TRAVEL INCIDENTS



TUSHAR KANTI GHOSH

AMIT ROY

Who can kill if the Lord saves!



RAILWAY travel has been my hobby since boyhood. To sit by the window side as the train rushes on, and watch the fleet scenes alongside the track, has always given me the utmost thrill. But to make my enjoyment complete, the train must move at the fullest speed.

Of course, I have travelled much by car as also by air in the course of the last ten or fifteen years. Nevertheless, such journeys fail to give me as much pleasure as I get from Railway travel, even though the former may prove a time saver. Even so, when I go abroad, there is little time to spare and I have to have recourse to aircraft. Undeniably, there is no lack of comfort in a plane. While in the air, you are spared every headache over your meals, bedding, and luggage. And motor travel, however pleasant, ceases to be so, if one has to cover more than two hundred miles a day. Even a day-long Railway journey does not tire me out, provided I secure a comfortable berth.

Talking of railway travel in my boyhood days, a small incident comes to my mind. I cannot now recall if the grand chord line had come into existence at that time. I was accompanying my eldest brother (Pijush Kanti Ghosh), his wife and two daughters to Varanasi (then Benares) by a train on the main line. It was the Puja season; on account of an overwhelming rush of passengers, a first class compartment was converted into a second class and reserved for us. With a railway time table in my possession, I forthwith occupied a corner seat. There I sat tight comparing all the while—the name of each station as it came in sight with that occurring in brochure. As it was getting late, my sister-in-law insisted on my having dinner and going to bed. I took the meal all right, but felt the least inclined to sleep. For one thing, I was travelling by first class for the first time in my life, and the luxury and comfort I enjoyed, were beyond my experience.

"Why are you sitting so late? Why don't you go to bed?"—my brother queried at last. "I am getting the names of the stations by heart," I replied.

My brother thereupon asked if I was trying to memorise the names of all the stations from Howrah to Benares ? I replied in the affirmative.

"Very good," he retorted, "I won't mind your sitting up the whole night, but, look here, you have to tell me from your memory the names of each and every station all along the route as soon as we reach Benares."

It may be a pleasant surprise for any one to know that I passed the test creditably. Even now, after the lapse of so many years, and at this age of mine, I can correctly recite the names of all the railway stations on the main line from Howrah to Benares, barring, of course, those new ones which have meanwhile been set up. For this feat of memory, my brother rewarded me with a prize.

Thanks to this thirst of mine for Railway travel, I have been trying for many years past to make our important trains run faster. But, let alone an increase in the speed of our trains, it has been more reduced now than was the case thirty or thirty five years ago. I appreciate the reason underlying the step, namely, to bring down the number of accidents. At the same time, I feel that enhanced speed should not lead to a higher incidence of mishaps, provided the rules and regulations framed by the Railway Administration are strictly adhered to. And if these are not properly observed, accidents may happen at any time, no matter how slow the speed of a train may be. This ought to explain why goods and passenger trains too meet with accidents. Let me cite an example here how the speed of our trains has not increased a bit in spite of the passage of so many years. In 1933-34, the 8 Down Toofan Express used to cover the distance between Delhi and Calcutta in 23 hours. Today, the Delhi Mail—our Number one Showpiece—takes more than 24 hours to span the same length. When the late Mr. Lal Bahadur Shastri was in charge of the Railway portfolio, he used to stay at my Barasat residence when he visited Calcutta. Naturally high Railway officials used to come to meet him and I had the opportunity of suggesting to them the introduction of a fast train just like the present Rajdhani Express. Needless to say, the proposal came to nothing at that time. Later I discussed the matter with some of Mr. Shastri's successors. Of course my proposal was for a non-stop train from Howrah to Benaras. Now of course the Rajdhani Express has been a great improvement upon the idea.

I remember in this connection how I got the idea. As far back as in 1946 I travelled by the Edinburgh Euston (London) non-stop Scottish Express. The train, at one time, was running at 90 miles per hour, I was told. The engine men told me further that we were on our way down to Beatoeck station from Beatoeck Summit. At any rate, 90 miles an hour made a deep impression on my mind inspiring me to harbour the ambition that our country also must have such fast trains. Later on, I had more experience of high speed railway travel in various other countries. I particularly recall the intense pleasure I derived from the hurricane speed of the Boston-Pennsylvania train, fitted with big revolving chairs, which I and some of my Indian Editor friends occupied in 1957. The company included Vivekananda Mukhopadhyaya, then editor of *Jugantar*, Kasturi Sreenivasan, editor, *Hindu*, C. R. Sreenivasan, editor, *Swadesmitran* and D. R. Manekar, currently Chairman, All India Newspaper Editors Conference.

Before the scheme of the Rajdhani Express was put into effect, I sought to induce the Railway Minister to so arrange that the train stopped at Allahabad for a few minutes. But Mr. Parimal Ghosh, Minister of State for Railways, explained to

me how the arrangement was not possible in view of the Railways' long-term plan to convert it into a really non-stop train. The present stoppages at three places, Gomoh, Moghulsarai and Kanpur, which are purely for operational reasons, will soon be abolished. The Rajdhani Express has, however, one shortcoming—it does not run everyday. For instance on my arrival in Delhi from London on July 7 last I was disappointed to learn that the Rajdhani Express was not scheduled to run for the following two days. So I had to take the Delhi Mail to return to Calcutta.

Now I shall tell you the thrilling story of my travels in the famous 'Bullet' trains of Japan. These trains are the fastest in the world running at a speed of 120 miles per hour. With no drivers to operate and guided entirely by electronic computers, the arrival and departure of the trains are invariably marked by strictest adherence to correct timings. There is, besides, no whistle or bell to alert the passengers: they have to be in their seats at the right moment. Every form of comfort is provided in the train during the journey. The 'Bullet' trains, which run between Tokyo and Osaka, are more than one in number and stop at two intermediate stations, Nagoya and Kyoto, for a few minutes. Even at this break-neck speed, there is little noise and rocking. A few months before this, my interest in 'Bullet' trains had been roused by the study of a well-printed brochure sent to me by the Japanese Embassy. The pictures and the descriptions of the 'Bullet' trains created in me a desire to travel by them. The opportunity came in the shape of my attendance at the annual meeting of the International Press Institute scheduled to be held at Ottawa (Canada) in 1969. The invitation extended to me by two editors of American dailies to be their guests in America acted as a further incentive. In addition to these, a few dailies of Japan requested me to visit their country for a few days. Accordingly, I decided to proceed to Canada via Japan and return home by the London route where the Commonwealth Press Union was to hold its annual session. To come to the topic of the 'Bullet' trains, one cannot really realise the high speed at which the train is moving, unless one looks out of the window. As I sat watching the scenes outside, they continually came in and vanished from view at a terrific speed.

Our tour itinerary in Canada began after the conclusion of the International Press Institute Conference in Ottawa. We visited several cities. In Toronto, I was told that if I liked, I could dash to Montreal by Canada's fastest express, Rapido. The thrill of my 'Bullet' train journey was matched by my delight in travel by this train which covers the distance from Toronto to Montreal in less than 5 hours. The 'Rapido' also carries in it every means of ease and comfort. My treatment of the subject will remain incomplete, if incidentally I omit from this a mention of Canada's fascinating scenic beauty. The entire country from end to the end looks like a tastefully decorated garden house. As the train steamed out of the Toronto City limits, I came across a bewitching sight that baffles description. For miles on end, the sea seemed to run along with us. One thing, however, puzzled me. The train skirted the sea; but no waves rolled over the beach. The conductor of the train, however, enlightened me by saying that it was Lake Ontario which seemed like a sea. About Canada's wealth, a little incident is remembered by me. During my stay at Ottawa I was invited to lunch by Mr. Mitchener, the Governor-General. Mr. Mitchener, who was Canadian High Commissioner to India, and his wife were known to me, who had lunched with me at my Baraset house. Since then we have been great friends.

In course of our talk I expressed the view that his countrymen were richer than the Americans. Some of the other guests present on that occasion, who included India's High Commissioner, General J. N. Choudhury raised a mild protest. In reply, I pointed out that although the total wealth of America was greater than that of Canada, the latter's per capita income must be rated higher because of the sparseness of its population. The statement, which I made in a jocular vein, is perhaps true.

I shall finish the story of my Railway travel with another episode which goes to prove that "The Saviour is mightier than the destroyer." Had it been otherwise, I would not be sitting now comfortably to write this narrative.

The incident happened in the year 1964. Prior to this, in 1963, I learnt in Paris how a very fast train ran from the French capital to Milan in Italy via Geneva and passed on the way through the Simplon Tunnel at the bottom of the Alps, the longest tunnel in the world. This piece of information along with another report that the Trans-Europa Express (T.E.E.) the cosiest train on the Continent, was going to be abolished soon, whetted my desire to avail myself of the pleasures of a journey by this train soon enough. Accordingly, next year, in 1964, on the eve of my departure for London, I purchased a ticket for this train through the Calcutta branch of the American Express Co. and instructed the *Jugantar*'s Paris representative, Mr. Dilip Malakar, to accompany me from Paris. It was arranged that I should leave Paris on 25th June by the Trans-Europa Express. And for this I should come to Paris from London on the 24th June. The Air India plane by which I was to fly, was debarred from landing in Paris on account of a sudden strike by the employees of Air France. But I had to be in that city at all costs in order to attend a party arranged that evening in my honour at the Indian Embassy. However, through the good offices of Mr. Dala, Manager of Air India's London Office, I succeeded in getting to Paris by steamer and train via the Dover-Calais route.

I cannot help mentioning a humorous anecdote here. We had a couple of correspondents in Paris: Kamlesh Banerji of *Patrika* (now dead) and Dilip Malakar (*Jugantar*). Overzealous to receive me alone, both came down to the Paris station, each on his own without the knowledge of the other. As my train screeched to a halt, I looked around for them but in vain. I failed to meet either of our men at

the station even after a good search. Both Banerji and Malakar were waiting at two separate points—perhaps as a strategy to get hold of me exclusively. But they were so busy with their manoeuvring that neither could spot me as I went out of the station platform. At the hotel I was rung up and told that both our strategists were pacing up towards the hotel now that they had missed me at the station. At Paris that evening at the Embassy party I was surprised to learn that I could not travel by the next day's T.E.E. (Trans-Europa Express) because my seat had not been reserved. In addition to a first class ticket, some reservation fee must also be paid, and this latter had not been complied with. I was pressed by my friends at the party to prolong my stay in Paris by another day. But, as is my habit, I refused to change my programme which I always strictly adhere to, because I fix my programme after much deliberation. Moreover, great Paris does not mean anything to one who goes to bed at nine in the evening. To such a man Paris and Panagar were the same. Luckily for me, a seat meant for V.I.P.'s, was secured in the train and I could start for Milan by Trans-Europa Express from Gare-de-Lyon on June 25 as per schedule. At that time I failed to see the finger of destiny which guided me to go on 25th. Two or three days later, I was startled, while in Florence, to read in the Paris edition of the *New York Herald* the report about the disaster overtaking the Trans Europa-Express on June 26: "Trans-Europa Express Crashes. Many killed and injured." The news flashed across the front page of the paper in big bold letters gave me a jolt and almost stopped my heart. The ill-fated Express, the report stated, left Paris on June 26 and met with an accident. Thus, had I, in pursuance of my friends' insistence, stopped another day in Paris, I would not have had the privilege of writing out this travel story safe and sound. Hence I repeat, "Who can destroy, if Lord Krishna saves?"

As for speed of our trains, I hold firmly to the view that the speed of the Rajdhani Express and other important trains can be easily enhanced without any danger to the safety of the travelling public. May I expect our Railway Ministry and the Railway Board to give another thought to this proposition?

I end with an apology. The story, I have written, relates to events that happened years ago. As such, I might have committed some inadvertent mistakes which, I hope, my generous readers will overlook and forgive.



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Satyajit Ray's



THE cinema of the West today is a depressing vista on the whole. It is a cinema, mainly, of youth turned cynical, heretical. Nothing is sacred any more. Conventions are these to be scoffed at, flouted. The attitude to life finds a perfect reflection in the attitude to art. In the cinema, throw plot and grammar and logic out of the window, and out with them go coherence, comprehensibility and conviction.

But does this not have dire consequences on the film matters? Do they not promptly go out of business? Oh no, because—and this is another gift of the troubled times—taboos, too, have gone the way of all other conventions. So, to all the higgledy piggledy confusion of forms and ideas, you add a dash of uninhibited sex, and you have what it takes to lure them in and take care of the box-office.

It is significant that the erotic scenes in these so-called 'fragmented' and revolutionary films are themselves rarely fragmented. One senses the film makers' anxiety not to lessen their titillatory impact.

Strangely enough, such is the state of the world today, that even this passes for Art, is taken seriously and written about at length.

Part of the trouble lies in the nature of the medium itself. If you take some words at random and put them together, you make gibberish, and everyone who knows the meaning of words, knows it as such. But if you take unrelated moving images and string them together, there will always be some

painter to paint. One realises, today, that while serious and artistic films may have been made in this part of the world from time to time, very few people—and I don't mean the public, but people connected with the making of films—think of the cinema as an art.

Who is the artist creating for them? The wider public does not count where true appreciation of art is concerned. The public will go and see something that pleases it—and this does not necessarily preclude serious art. But who provides the artist with the incentive to create? Not just a coterie of admiring friends, surely. What about the critics? Those on the dailies will be the first to admit that they are not always free to write what they feel about a film and this applies to most critics on most of the daily newspapers of the world. At any rate, in the limited time and space at their disposal, they can scarcely hope to do justice to a serious work of art. There are others on weeklies or monthly magazines who are perhaps in a more favourable position. Some of these have even earned a measure of reputation. One—allegedly discerning—remarked apropos of my last film Goopy Gyne that it gave a clear indication of the director's striving to pander to the box office. And this about a film that broke completely fresh ground, was based on a comparatively unknown short story by an author who was certainly no Sarat Chandra in popularity; used no stars, cast a completely unknown artiste and another comparatively unknown, in two leading roles, used songs entirely legitimately, perhaps for the first time; inserted a near-abstract dance, seven minutes long, to the music of abstract and unfami-

THOUGHTS FOR THE FESTIVE SEASON

people who will hold that the resultant strip of celluloid aims at some profundity. And yet the contemporary scene cries out to be filmed. But it takes a Godard to do it and invest it with significance. But then Godard has cinema in his bones, and Godard can destroy in order to create, because he knows only too well what he is destroying, what he must replace it with. Also, he has the detachment that no artist can do without.

There are others, such as Truffaut and Resnais, who oscillate between destruction and preservation. Yet others, like Bergman, strive for clarity within the limits of a malleable form which they stretch and mould to suit the needs of their chosen themes.

These along with a handful of other men of exceptional talent and integrity, save the modern European cinema from being reduced to an exhibition of ineptitude or vulgarity, or both. One does not look to the West for inspiration today; one looks to see what pitfalls to avoid.

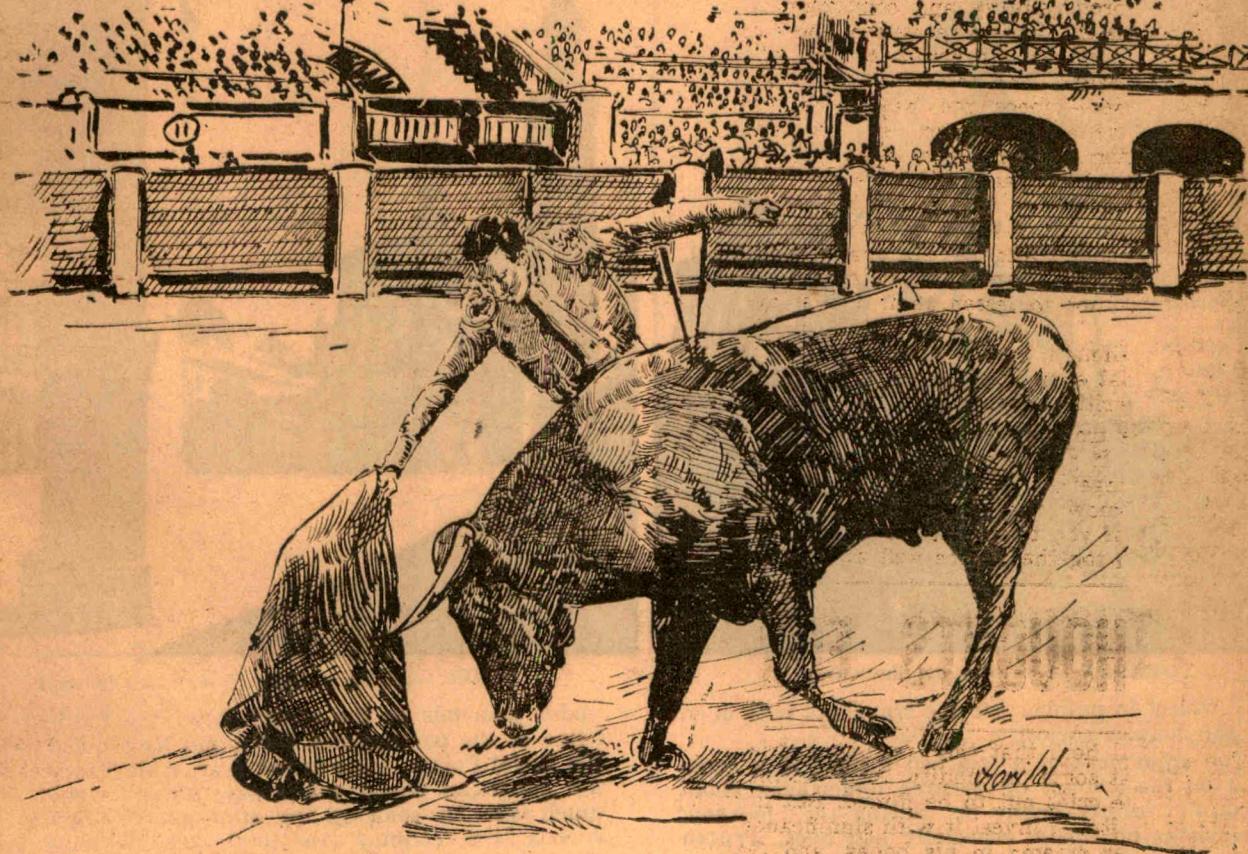
The recent series of unpleasant trends marks one of the blackest chapters in Bengal's film history. There is no point in going into sordid details. What was most saddening was that in all the bickering and shouting of slogans and slinging of mud back and forth, there was not one mention of the cinema as art. The iniquities of producers, distributors and exhibitors—yes; The plight of technicians and workers—yes; high budget and low budget, big films and small films—yes; The star system—yes; black money—yes; but not even a whisper about the fact that the cinema is also an art where an artist wishes to create just as a poet wishes to write verse and a

liar South Indian percussion, and finally, provided no romance, no sentimentality, and only two females who appear for barely five minutes in the very last scene of the film. How discerning can you get?....

But this is small nuisance compared with those that are encountered in the process of making a film. The Film Institute at Poona is at least 4 times as well-equipped as any studio in Calcutta, and there is no ostensible reason—unless it be sheer lack of enterprise—for this to be so. Here, while a shot is being taken, one holds one's breath for fear the lights might go dim in the middle of the shot, either of their own accord, or through a drop in the voltage; one holds one's breath while the camera rolls on the trolley, lest the wheels encounter a pothole on the studio floor and wobble—thus ruining the shot; one holds one's breath on location in fear of a crowd emerging out of the blue (we have seen this happen even in the remote jungles of Bihar), come to watch the fun (how can shooting ever be *work*?) One holds one's breath while the film is processed for fear of it being spoiled through sheer carelessness; one holds one's breath, too, while the film is being edited, because one never knows when the ravaged moviola might turn back on the editor in revenge and rip the precious film to ribbons. No wonder film makers become prone to heart diseases.

None, or at least, none that can throw any light on the gloom of the present situation. But, of course, films will keep on being made and probably by me too. But what kind of films and under what circumstances, I do not myself know at the moment.

PETER CRADDOCK, inveterate traveller, sends his impressions from Spain, the LAND OF THE MATADOR



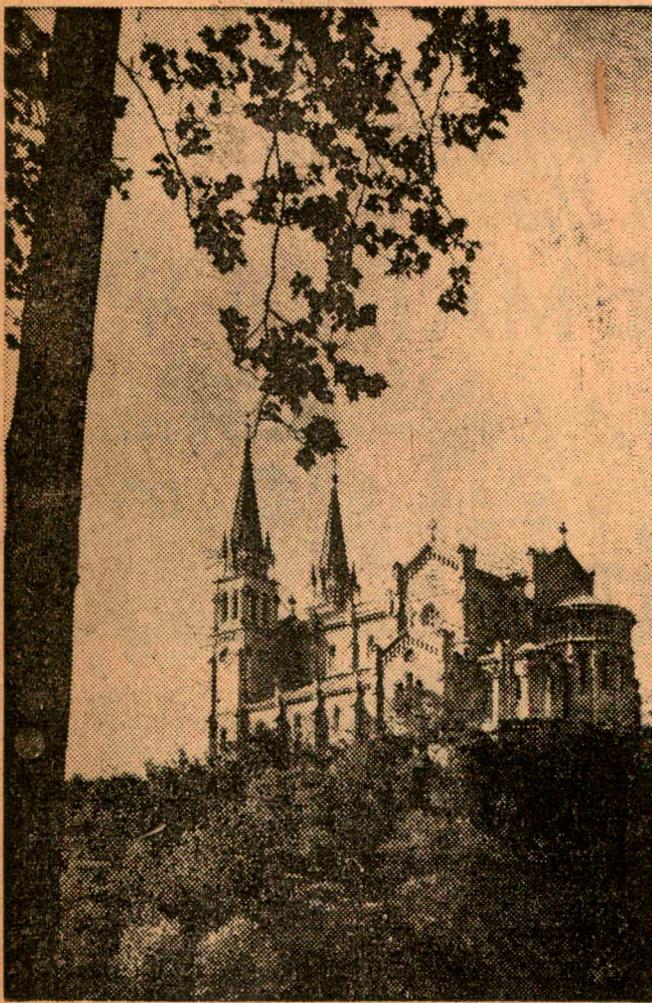
wonder what impressions of Spain the American gentleman I met in Madrid will take back with him to San Francisco. Spain today, France yesterday —next on to Portugal, he was in the course of 'doing' Europe in 30 days. He had been especially looking forward to the

Spanish part of the tour. He had learned Spanish at school, read Don Quixote and seen a film about bullfights. What he was longing to do was to 'meet the natives' and 'soak up the atmosphere'. But the demands of package touring (and of an excessively organising courier) compelled him to visit the tourist sights, the tourist shops and the tourist hotels. He left Spain a few dollars poorer, with a flight bag full of 'typical' souvenirs and the museums and palaces faithfully recorded on film, but completely ignorant and unaffected by what Spain is all about.

Spain to a large extent owes its recent prosperity to its boom in tourism (the estimated number of foreign visitors this year approaches 22 millions). The English working man's resort used to be Blackpool, now it is Benidorm. French, Germans, and Scandinavians stream across the frontier in search

of constant sunshine and the Mediterranean Sea. Unspoilt fishing villages have been senselessly developed overnight into international resorts. Restaurant signs tempt the tourist with 'Tea like Granny makes', and such delicacies of English cuisine as 'fish and chips'. Fellow countrymen frizzle alongside each other on the sun-drenched shingle. What is there to remind people that they are in Spain rather than in Italy, France, or their own country? Certainly the domestic staff of the hotel will be genuine natives, but even they will understand the international language of dollars and deutschmarks.

It is a great pity that the majority of visitors see Spain only as a member either of the cultural package tour of my American friend, or as part of the sun-seeking safaris that head for the Mediterranean. It is easy for a person to enter a country, so to speak, without any of the country entering him. Spain is more than sun and sand, and monuments and museums, but to discover the qualities that constitute the country and character of the people the visitor must be prepared to venture alone. Foreign travel loses a lot of its value if we miss the opportunity to see how other people think and behave. But many are content to be mere 'tourists' satisfied with a surface impression of the foreign



COVADONGA — Vista del Santuario

land. Select in number are the travellers with open eyes and human curiosity.

The enjoyment of a trip can depend to a large extent on the amount of research undertaken about the country, either before or during the journey. Guide books on Spain, especially bad ones, written in a prose as dry and arid as dust, can be found in abundance. Factual accounts the traveller certainly needs, and all the guides should carry historically accurate information. But what the majority of them fail to give is any idea of the feel or atmosphere of a place. Of little assistance in this matter is the propaganda issued by the Spanish Ministry of Information and Tourism, which though colourful and well presented, is written in such gushing and purple prose, that the reader is convinced that even the most squalid suburb is a paradise on earth. Typical of such language is the official guide of Gijon the capital of the Costa Verde. Of the worker's university the guide says 'It seems not to hear history's rough echo, nor the ibex dream, nor the undergrowth's rustle'; of the beach 'This is Gijon's large window; the soul that opens it's eyes every dawn'. To discover what a place is really like one can do no better than turn to highly personal accounts as H. V. Mortimer's 'A Traveller in Spain' or James Mitchener's 'Tiberia', dealing with people as well as places.

Paris may be fun and London swinging, but Madrid is the European capital of elegance. The prices in the boutiques along the Avenida de Jose Antonio, Madrid's central boulevard, should be enough to convince the international set that this is a fashionable city. Madrid is not a city that makes



GIJON — Iglesia y patio Universidad Laboral

undue demands on the visitor. After the Prado (the home of the paintings of Goya and Velasquez), and the Royal Palace, there is not a great deal to see. As my American friend would say there would be much time to 'soak up the atmosphere'. Spain is such a large country (the total area including the Balearics and the Canary Islands covers 193,671 square miles), that the visitor will probably have to confine his attention to one area alone apart from the capital. The Spain of gipsies, Flamenco music, and bullfights is Andalusia, with the three Moorish cities of Seville, Cordoba, and Granada. Granada has added attraction; the intensely romantic atmosphere has made the city the 'honeymoon capital' of Spain.

What of the people? Though they may be introvert in the north, extrovert in the south, wherever one goes, one will find an extremely hospitable people who derive enormous pleasure from life. But the Spaniard likes to take life easy, and the 'manana' attitude, the idea that everything can be put off until tomorrow is the cause of eccentricities of timekeeping in public transport and official slowness. It is exasperating at first, but when trains do eventually arrive, one begins to appreciate that speed is not the most important thing in life. Life is short, let's enjoy it to the full says the Spaniard and a neurotic emphasis on timekeeping only makes for anxiety. The visitor will be eternally frustrated and disillusioned if he does not understand this outlook. The attitude may mean that Spain will never become an advanced nation of the Western European type. But is it not more important in life to be happy?

Aromatic Plants

of India

K. BISWAS



THE aromatic plants played a great role in the religious, social and cultural development of human civilisation from time immemorial. In India the use of perfume from essential oil-yielding plants dates from the Vedic period. In those early days the fragments of roots, stems, leaves, flowers, fruits and seeds were used mainly for religious and social functions. In the Arsa period and the subsequent period of Kalidasa from 1500 B.C. to 600 A.D. the use of sweet scented plants is mentioned in many of Kalidasa's writings as well as in those of other equally famous poets and philosophers.

The Chinese are believed to be the forerunners in this art but little is known about their history and preparations. The first evidence of the use of perfumes in China dates back to a little before 1000 B.C. From the monuments of Egypt (repositories of relics of Egyptian rulers) it is evident that the Egyptians in ancient times knew the methods for preparation of oils, balsams and fermented liquors to embalm dead bodies for preservation. The Persians were perhaps the first to distill roses. According to Khaldun about 810-817 A.D., the province of Faristan (Persia) used to send 3000 bottles of rose water to the treasury at Baghdad annually as a tribute. An extensive trade in odoriferous oils and ointments was carried on between the ancient countries of the Orient, Greece and Rome.

In India references are available in the Sutras and Vedas about the use of perfumes specially in rituals. The Indians were also familiar with the preparation of sacrificial liquors. The Buddhists used to bathe the statues of Gods with perfumed waters. Kasturi (musk), Chandan (sandalwood), Kesher (saffron) and Kapur (Camphor) have been freely used by the Indians since the Vedic period. In the Gupta period (300-400 A.D.) the use of cream bases, facial cosmetics, hair oils, coryllium etc., was common. Mention is also made of the Indian perfumes in Pali and Islamic books. Moghul rulers were the great promoters of Indian perfumes. Fazal in Ain-i-Akbari writes about Emperor Akbar "His Majesty is exceedingly fond of perfumes and the court chamber was continually scented with flowers and fumigated with preparations of ambergris and aloes, etc. which are burnt in gold and silver censers. His Majesty constantly used perfumes over his body and hairs with odoriferous ointments etc."

In the subsequent period of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries the Portuguese studied aromatic plants and the then Indian Botanic Gardens made laudable attempt to introduce, acclimatise and grow on an experimental basis aromatic plants along with medicinal and other exotic plants since its foundation in 1787 until the termination of the long services of the writer as superintendent of the then Royal and now Indian Botanic Garden, Calcutta.

Edward Sagarin remarks as follows:—

"From dawn until twilight and long into night and from the cradle of the infant to the silence of



the grave, we are surrounded by the odorous materials. Perfumes in one form or the other are a part of the things we see, touch, eat, wear and smell. We take our odours for granted and little realise how much we should be affected, if our lives are deprived of perfumes."

"It is said that Empress Noorjahan was in the habit of taking bath in a tank full of rose water. She is also said to have first discovered the Otto of rose "Itr" "Ittar" floating on rose water on a cold morning and it is known as "Itr-i-Jehangiri" as mentioned in Emperor Jahangir's memoirs in 1605. Queen Elizabeth I is reported to have used Indian perfumes.

Sandalwood oil and the flower of punag yield excellent scents. The highly scented orchid (*Platanthera susannae*) a ground orchid with large flowers on long spikes gives off a most refined perfume. There are also other scented orchids. These scents if tapped will earn foreign exchange, too.

Moreover, there are many other plants such as *Pterospermum acerifolium* of the plains, *Onosma* species, *Rhododendron setosum*, *R. lepidotum*, *R. anthophogon*, *Juniperus* species and other essential oil-bearing plants of the Alpine zones of the West and East Himalayas which are new potential sources of scent and perfumes which need investigation and exploitation.

Many of the roots, flowers, leaves and fruits of about 20,000 Indian flowering plants possess some kind of smell. In this book on aromatic plants, now under preparation by the author, to be published by the C.S.I.R. about 200 well recognised species of aromatic plants which are commonly used for their odoriferous property and are of sufficient market value have been enumerated and described in classified order with their habitat distribution and common uses for their fragrant essential oils. It is, therefore, hoped that cultivation of aromatic plants, would be taken up by those interested in this industry for meeting our internal needs and earning sufficient foreign exchange. .

Elizabeth Dunbar, English and loyal, looks for a

REDISCOVERED ROYALTY

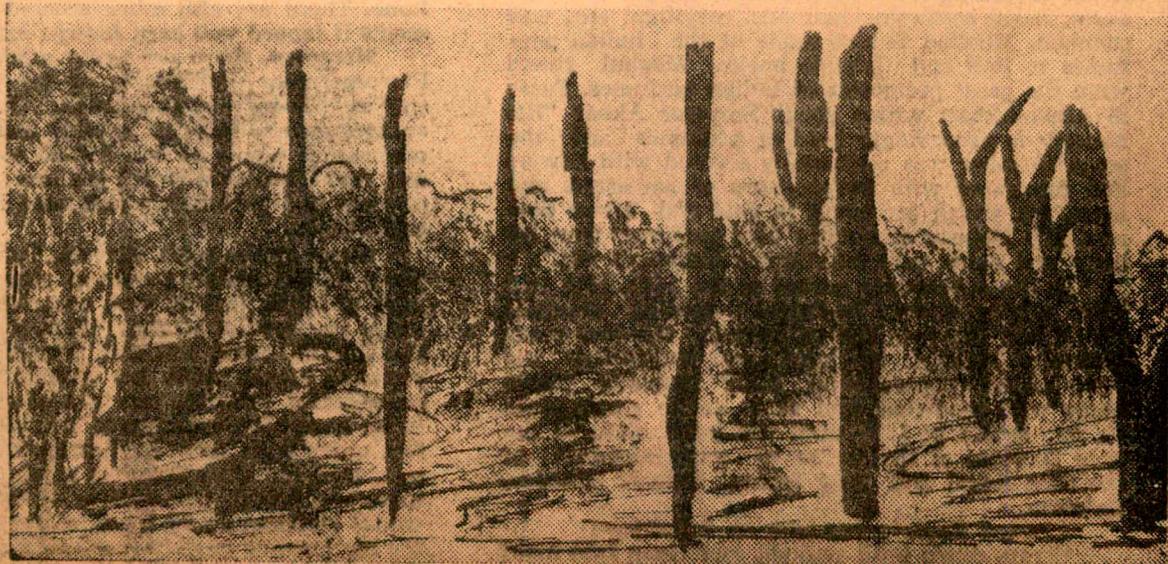


HIS was the year that Britain rediscovered its Royal Family. Men may have landed on the moon and rowed the Atlantic, pop singers may have come and film stars gone, but no one has been as idolised or as secure at the top of the popularity polls as Britain's first family, and in particular as its eldest son, Prince Charles.

The monarchy, in common with many other great British institutions, is subject to periodic bouts of public apathy. Everyone knows that the Queen is there, safe on her throne and getting on with the

job of launching ships and opening new hospitals and entertaining visiting heads of state. But it takes the occasional royal marriage or coronation, even a minor scandal, to jolt the public into a very conscious awareness of the royal heritage. Prince Philip himself remarked disarmingly some time ago that the Royal Family was going through a dull period, with the Queen and himself approaching middle age and the children away at school.

But this year the pep was put back into the monarchy. It is not being irreverent to say that the Palace pulled off a series of masterly public relations coups that jerked the royals back into the headlines



and established Prince Charles, the heir to the throne, firmly in the public mind.

It all started with a film that really merited that overworked cinema adjective—remarkable. For it was the first time that anyone, let alone, a television cameraman, had been permitted a behind-the-scenes look at British royalty. We saw the Queen at work in Buckingham Palace, dealing with state papers, entertaining President Nixon, chatting with the Prime Minister on his regular Tuesday evening visit. And we saw her off-duty: picnicking with the children (Prince Philip cooks a good sausage); shopping for ice cream with her youngest son; watching television with the family.

The most delicious scene of all came towards the end. The Queen, her husband and their two eldest children were lunching together en famille and giggling over the Queen's story of her distinguished ancestor, Queen Victoria, that most regal of monarchs, who betrayed her amusement with only the tiniest tremble when a visiting ambassador fell flat on his back at the foot of the throne. Her Majesty then went on to describe the torture of trying to keep a straight face on the occasion when she gave audience to a dignitary who, the Home Secretary had warned her, could scare any human being by his look.

This unique glimpse of the Royal Family, which not only told the British people something about the characters beneath the crowns but also unobtrusively demonstrated the high degree of organisation, resilience and sheer stamina demanded of a monarch, was watched by a massive audience of 27 million people in Britain, about half the population, when it was shown on television.

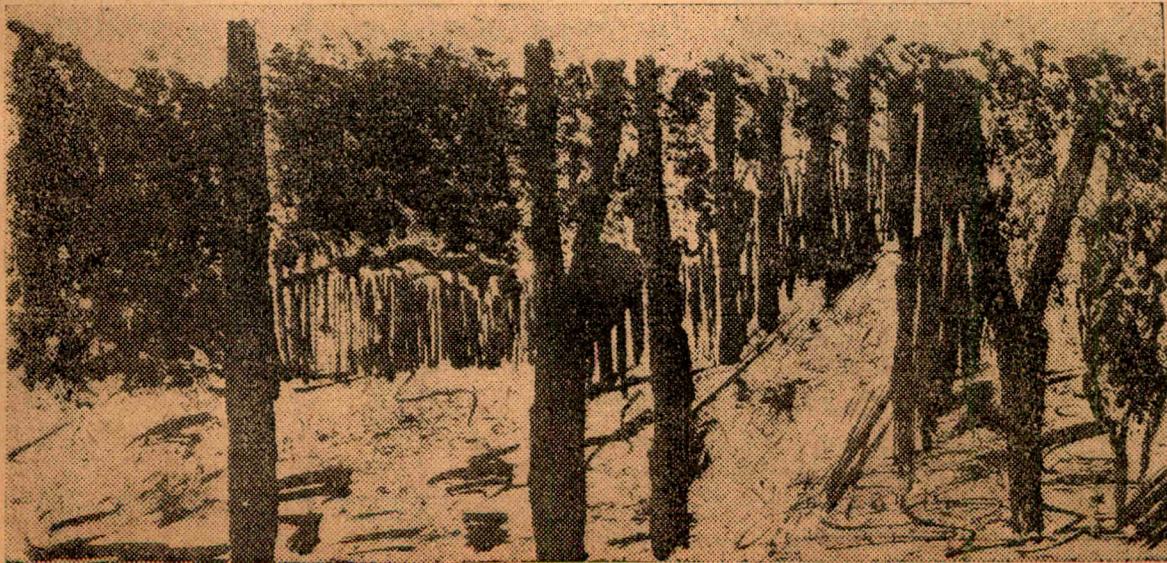
And it was a triumphant prelude to the investiture, one month later, of the 20-year old Prince Charles as Prince of Wales—a title that has been bestowed on the eldest sons of British monarchs since 1301.

On 1st July, 1969, in the splendid, ruined amphitheatre of Caernarvon Castle, the Queen presented her son to the people of Wales in one of the most lavish displays of royal pageantry since the coronation in 1953. Despite the grumblings from some M.P.s about the £ 200,000 of taxpayers' money which was spent on the occasion and the spasmodic bomb scares from the extremist wing of the Welsh nationalists, the Free Wales Army, the investiture was an unqualified success.

The Palace had taken great pains to show that Prince Charles takes his new principality very seriously. He spent several weeks at a Welsh university during which time he met the people, studied the Welsh culture and became remarkably fluent in the tongue-twisting Welsh language, so dear to the Nationalists but in fact only spoken by about one in ten of the people of Wales.

Charles is a young man of charm and, despite a childhood passed largely in the public gaze and an adolescence haunted by reporters and security detectives, he is also relaxed and unselfconscious. When he knelt at the Queen's feet on the day of the investiture, robed in ermine and breeches to kiss his monarch's hand and swear undying allegiance, there was not a dry eye in the country. And at the same time, Princess Anne, now a vivacious 18-year old, has been subjected to the limelight of press and television cameras and has endeared herself to the media men by posing happily and readily for photos in her fashionable miniskirts and pretty hats.

The Queen has always taken her responsibility as the personification of the State very seriously and it is creditable that in this fast-moving, quick changing world, she has brought up her children to take on their serious and historic roles. The two eldest royal children are proving to be the best advertisements the monarchy has ever had and, for this year at least, no one has risked republican sentiments.



PUTUL CHATTERJI



AWABATA was born in Osaka in 1899. His father was a doctor. Kawabata lost both his parents when he was two, his grandmother when he was eight, and his grandfather, who brought him up, at 16.

Kawabata wanted to be an artist. But fate made him a writer. During his college life he took up literature as his only aim in life. He wrote several good stories during this period. He studied both Japanese and English literature at the Imperial University of Tokyo, where he graduated in 1924, and wrote his first successful novel "Izunodoriko" (Dancers of Izu Province). In January and February, 1925 this novel was serialised in a Japanese literary paper. He published a magazine called "Bungai Jidai." Kawabata is one of the few leading Japanese novelists whose works have been translated overseas. He is today one of Japan's leading novelists, particularly known for his psychological novels: his best known works include "Yukiguni" (Snow Country, 1935), "Senbazuru" (A Thousand Cranes, 1949); "Saikounsha" (Re-married, 1953); "Tokyo no Hito" (Tokyo People, 1955); "Mizuumi" (The Lakes, 1955). Another book "Nizi" was published between 1934 to 1936 in different magazines serially. Dancers, gaisha

Shimamura felt that he would have to take leave of Komako then. But something happened. A woman jumped from the roof of that burning house. Shimamura moved forward and found that she was Uoko. He then moved towards Komako. The dead body of Uoko was in Komako's lap.

The story of "Izunodoriko" revolves round a young dancing girl belonging to a roving dancing party. Kawabata had met this dancing girl when he was only a school student. He has mingled many incidents and experiences of his childhood in the story. According to the critics this novel "is the first masterly example of the restrained, evocative prose in which he tells his sad and sensuous stories."

The central theme of his novel, "Nizi" revolves round a dancing theatrical party of Asakusa in Tokyo. Kimura was the hero of all plays of the group. Ginko was the heroine. The other dancing girls were Ayako, Fujiko, Hanako, Chhyoko. Ginko, the heroine was a simple girl of seventeen. She was not very pretty but she was loved by the dancing master of the party, Nakane. Ginko, however, did not respond to his love. She silently loved Kimura. The novel is a masterly exposition of the characters of Kimura, the carefree hero, and the girls named Ginko, Ayako, Fujiko, Hanako and Chhyoko. It also deals with Ranko, the female villain. It presents a picture of the Asakusa region. The dialogues are lively.

Arati Sen Gupta

writes about

Japan's Third
Nobel Prize Winner

YASUNARI KAWABATA

girls and Asakusa regions are the background of his many famous novels. His works have been translated into a number of languages. "Yukiguni" (Snow Country) is considered to be his best novel.

The story of the novel "Yukiguni" (Snow Country) starts with a flashback. Shimamura, a resident of Tokyo and acquainted with Western dancing art is the hero of the novel. After travelling in mountainous regions for seven days Shimamura came to an inn in a mountain village. Being tired he was eager to meet a gaisha dancer. Unfortunately there was none in the inn at that time. Instead he met a girl named Komako. Shimamura felt a special tenderness for her. Next day Shimamura asked Komako to bring a gaisha girl there as he was reluctant to spoil the virgin Komako. A gaisha girl was brought in, but Shimamura felt no desire for her. When Shimamura visited that inn later he heard that Komako was no longer the same. She was by that time involved in a bad profession. Shimamura met Komako for the second time, but could not hate her. In fact his attraction for Komako increased. After a few years Shimamura came again and met Komako who was then the mistress of a gentleman. Shimamura learnt that Komako did not like the man; instead she loved him. At that time Shimamura became closely acquainted with a gaisha girl Uoko. One night suddenly a siren rang. There was fire in a godown. Shimamura and Uoko went there.



Yasunari Kawabata was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1968.

Of his many good stories, mention may be made of 'Hokuro no Nikki' (The Mole). The story was written in 1940. Sayoko, the heroine of the story, had a small mole between her right neck and right shoulder. During her childhood she used to play with the mole with her hands. Curiously, her mother and sisters did not object to it. The habit lingered on. After marriage when this habit attracted the notice of her husband she was scolded by him. She promised to stop the habit. But habit was such that she could not stop playing with the mole. As a result she was even beaten by him. Her mother advised her to go to a doctor to have the mole removed. She felt ashamed to go to a doctor for the purpose as the small mole was not visible to others.

"The Mole" is a product of Kawabata's period of full maturity, and reveals his understanding of the psychology of women which is perhaps the outstanding feature.

Before the Second World War, Kawabata established himself as a first class writer in Japan. He wrote very little during the war. There are rivalries and party factions in the literary fields in all countries. Japan is no exception. Kawabata is however, above any rivalry. His works will always remain fresh and will never be discarded as outdated because his writings deal with the very essence of Japanese culture and tradition.

Aroti Mukherjee, IAS, died tragically in a horse riding accident earlier this year.

ROSE AMONG THORNS

JAYASHREE MUKHERJI



"rose among thorns" — that's what her Principal at school used to call her", I said.

We were sitting in the garden and chatting, some of my sister's colleagues, college friends and I, and one of them had just asked me to say something about Aroti. That was the first thing that came into my head.

There was a silence. Then someone said "Well, I certainly don't consider myself to be a thorn! but its true—she was different from anyone else I've

known. Did she ever tell you about the time when there was a strike in college? The strikers had lined the entrance to college and were standing, hand in hand, to prevent anyone from entering. Aroti had left her practical book in the laboratory and we were telling her that there was no knowing whether she'd get it back or not. Suddenly she walked up to the gate, pulled the hands of the people in front of her apart, and calmly walked in to get her book. It never struck her that she might get hurt".

'How strange', I thought to myself. 'That was just the sort of rashness that I was cautioning her against, the last time I ever saw her. I was telling her that that sort of boldness doesn't pay these days'.

Aloud I said "Oh, she always did things like that. I remember an amusing incident that occurred when we were in England. She was about five years old and still hadn't learnt to speak in English. One evening, she was playing in the park and didi was riding a tricycle when suddenly an English boy appeared, pushed didi off and got onto the tricycle himself. You can imagine how enraged Aroti was! She promptly pushed him off onto the ground, sat astride on his chest and started beating him with her fists while she yelled in Bengali, that he was the worst boy she had ever seen!

"Very silly, that's what my sister would have said if she had known I was going to write this article."

"Both his mother and mine heard the furore and arrived on the scene. His mother strode angrily forward, afraid of what was going to happen, mummy held her breath. But there was no need to be afraid really, because Aroti, still trembling with anger, started telling the lady how very naughty her son was. Only that was in Bengali as well—and the lady found herself quite helpless against such a small but fierce volcano!"

"The incident had an interesting sequel though —Aroti and the boy became the best of friends after that. And he introduced Aroti to all the other little boys in the locality. From then onwards, whenever there was a party or some sort of a get-together, all the little girls would sit in a row with their lovely starched frocks on, while Aroti and the boys played in the mud outside, yelling and screaming at the top of their voices."

I alone knew how very sensitive she really was. Many years ago I had quarrelled with her and she had slapped me. We were very close to each other and so I was very upset, but Aroti was extremely undemonstrative and I knew that if I said anything to her I would only embarrass her. So I rummaged among the things in mummy's work-basket and found an old piece of faded pink silk in it. With blue thread I embroidered the words—'To dearest Ro, Love Pixie' (that was what she used to call me). She never said anything of course, but the next day she brought me a bunch of flowers.

And once when I was sitting in the CJ Hall in Bombay, on a warm evening listening to her name being called out for the S.C. Cup (she had stood first in Maharashtra and fifth in India) and the SSC Cup, I felt that no matter what happened later on in



life, there was one thing I would always be grateful for—that out of so many millions, I had been chosen to be her youngest sister.

And then someone else was talking. Evidently Aroti had once invited some friends over for tea and the girls were an hour late because they were busy dressing. When they finally arrived they found a notice which read 'Punctuality is a virtue' hanging on the door.

"She did something worse than that, once", I said. "Dadu had come to see mummy and Aroti off at the station and a gentleman in their compartment was very unpleasant to Dadu. Aroti was a child then, and was very fond of Dadu. So, at night, when everyone had gone to sleep, she quietly got up and poked the gentleman's foot. Of course the gentleman immediately woke mummy up and complained to her, but it was of no use because she continued to poke him all night despite Mummy's continuous scoldings!"

And all of a sudden I recalled a line from a letter one of her colleagues had written to me — 'Once when you had come to see Aroti someone had asked you whether you didn't find it boring because you had to stay in the Academy all day; and you answered I'm never bored when I'm with my sister.....'

"No, she never bored me. She always fascinated me because of the variety of things she was interested in. One moment she'd be pretending to be Robin Hood and shooting toy arrows with gusto, and yet the next, she'd be painting Ajanta figures with the most dreamy expression in her eyes.

I always coupled success and her together because that was how life treated her—because she had that rare quality of excelling in everything she tried her hand at. Before we left England, the Headmistress of her school had wanted to keep her back on a scholarship. Aroti loved life as it had come to her—there was no point in my wanting to change it for her now.

"And now I must change the subject" I thought to myself. "Where did you buy that pretty sari from?" I asked one of the girls.

I traced outlines on the arm of my chair and then said on a sudden impulse—"Would you like to read one of her letters?"

I brought the first letter she had written to me from Madhya Pradesh.

"Why don't you read it out aloud?" someone said. "Then we can all hear it."

I opened the letter and started reading.

"The Madhya Pradesh landscape is rugged and gravelly with crumbled red laterite. The plains do not run straight to the horizon. The monotony is always broken by shrubs and fields of fresh emerald green jawar or bajra. There are clumps of palm trees, guava groves and mango groves. At night, around the rest-house at Khajuraho, the jackals screamed and wailed but it was cool and refreshing to relax under the trees. The breeze was almost balmy, as if it was spring in the middle of winter."

I stopped. Suddenly I felt as though I had done something very wrong. I had spoilt the sanctity of what was personal.

Evidently one of her friends thought so too. "Despite everything Aroti was extremely reserved," he said. "We used to tease her and call her 'Miss Prim and Proper' at times, and tell her that she belonged to the Eighteenth Century?"

Someone laughed. "Do you know what we used to tease her about?" He said. "The untiring enthusiasm she had for P.T. Even on cold rainy mornings when half of us were devising excuses to

bunk P.T. there she'd be, spick and span, waiting to do the exercises. We gave her a book on Physical Training Exercises after that."

"I know", I said with a smile, "because when she came home, she promptly produced the book and insisted that I get up every morning and do the exercises with her. After the first week I saw to it that I developed a cold every morning!"

One of her colleagues laughed. "Aroti must have been extremely annoyed—and amused!" he said. "But it's strange coming to think of it—she was gay and jovial and yet, at the same time, so reserved as well that it wouldn't have entered our heads to try and stop her from doing what she wanted."

"Yes, she was as stubborn and obstinate as a mule" I replied, smiling.

But actually I was thinking about an incident that had occurred some years ago. I was telling Aroti, that very often, people do things not because they want to do them but because of popular opinion.

"That's stupid," she said.

"Well you can't expect a man to do something if every single person is going to criticise him for it."

"Why not. Let people say what they want—it really doesn't matter. As long as you know what you are doing is right, that's all that matters. Pixie, you've got to decide early on in life whether you want to live or exist. If you want to exist then listen to what everyone says and end up like that man, his son and the donkey. If you want to live you can only have one judge and a ruthless one at that—youself."

And she was like that in real life. Many people gave her a great deal of advice at all times. She always listened very quietly, never contradicting if the person was very persistent, and then went straight ahead and did exactly what she thought best. It was exasperating for the people concerned at times, but perhaps it was this characteristic of hers that one of her friends had referred to when she wrote to me—"Aroti would never have settled for half measures. She wanted to take the best from life and in return give the best in her to it."

But now all her friends were preparing to leave.

"It's getting very late. We'll have to go."

"Yes, it'll take a long time to return to Calcutta." I said. "Do come again."

We walked to the door. One of her colleagues turned to me. "Aroti was very fond of you" she said awkwardly. "She used to speak about you a great deal."

I smiled. I opened the gate and they left.

Aroti was fond of me—what an understatement! Of course she would never have claimed to be anything more—she was too reserved. But how could I tell them what had happened just the evening before she died. It was something that only Aroti and I would understand. I had been putting moth-balls into Aroti's clothes when I came across a small suitcase full of her best saris that mummy had painted and embroidered before Aroti had left for Mussoorie. I took them out and found a small wooden box at the corner of the suitcase. It was full of her hankies. She loved pretty things and so didi had crocheted lace edgings for her hankies and I had embroidered them. I took them all out, one by one. At the bottom of the box lay an old faded piece of cloth. My curiosity was aroused. I took it out it was a folded piece of old silk, faded pink in colour—about five years old. I opened it out. And the next moment the words embroidered in blue—"To dearest Ro, Love Pixie" swam before my eyes.

GIRISH CHANDRA'S JANA

PRAPHULLA KUMAR DAS GUPTA



ANA, one of Girish Chandra's masterpieces in mythological drama, was produced at the Minerva Theatre in December, 1894. From out of the slender material in Kashiram, Girish has created a drama pulsating with life. The first scene is highly significant. Agni appears as Kalpataru, King Niladhawa, his wife Jana and their son Prabira—each prays for a boon that is distinctively characteristic. When all others depart, Agni and Vidushaka are left alone. Vidushaka had so long been a silent spectator but now when the god questions why he had not prayed for a boon he becomes vocal. In his characteristic light vein he tells plain that when there has been so much talk on Hari, he may well foresee the consequence. For where Hari comes, disaster soon follows.

A deep fatalism broods over the drama. The characters fall into two well defined groups: deities and human characters. Of the former group, Agni does not in any way influence the action. Yet it is not for nothing that the character has been introduced. It is Agni who dominates the first scene and towards the end of the play in trying to console the disconsolate Niladhawa (Act V, Sc. 2), it is Agni again who explains the significance of the drama.

Ganga, though her initial strategy to restore the horse to the Pandavas failed, plays a more significant role. It is her ire transferred to the eyes of Jana that makes her formidable after the death of Prabira and from this follows the episode of the peepul tree. And, as we have seen, it is Ganga who protects Jana in the forest when she is like a deadly snake without its fangs. But in both cases her role is indirect. She appears openly when cursing Arjuna, but this is after the action has virtually ended with the death of Jana. It is indeed a projection into the future, a prelude to the story of Arjuna and Babhrubahan. Yet it is not without its significance, it emphasizes the moral governance of the universe.

Shiva plays a vital part in the evolution of the story, though he works in furtherance of the designs of Shrikrishna, whose will is Divine Will. But what is Shiva's plan to achieve this end? Prabira is invincible if he enters the field armed with the blessings of the mother. So he must be made to forget his mother. To this end he instructs Kama (Cupid) to overpower the young hero and sends a beautiful damsel, an attendant of Parvati to lure him at his weak moment. And when the plot works, he sends a messenger to inform Srikrishna that the hour to strike has come.

The human characters, except Vidushaka, have little complexity. Girish emphasises one or two dominant traits, yet at the magic touch of his genius, they throb with life. Vidushaka is a lineal descendant of the Vidushakas of Sanskrit drama. But like the Fool of Shakespeare's dramas, who is Vice of the Moralities refined and transformed, he is the old Vidushaka refined and transformed. His love of sweets pleasing to the palate, his jovial temperament and sallies of wit are a legacy from the past. But his deep faith in the Holy name of Hari is a distinctive Girishian touch.

The blending of contradictions in his character—his faith in the Holy Name and his dread of Srikrishna—makes the character of Vidushaka uni-

que. He believes in the Holy Name and, therefore, he feels secure about life after death. But he loves life, he loves to enjoy life, even though with him enjoyment of life is equivalent to tasting sweets pleasing to the palate. He believes that devotion to Srikrishna and earthly prosperity do not go together. This explains his worry at the frequent reference to Srikrishna during the 'Kalpataru' ceremony. The ugly haste with which Vidushaka left his king and his home, even though it is directly caused by dread of Srikrishna, throws light on another aspect of his character when we remember that he feels no sadness at such parting and still retains his old jovial temperament. It shows that nothing on earth can truly bind him.

The story of Vidushaka is interlinked with the episode of the Peepul tree, which is introduced with a twofold purpose. In the first place, it emphasises the Lord's concern for those who surrender themselves to Him unquestioningly. After the fall of Prabira, Jana is like a lioness robbed of its cub. The ire of Jahnavi flashes through her eyes and it would consume Arjuna, if he falls in her way. Even Srikrishna is visibly moved, for as he tells Krishaketu (Act IV, Sc. 1), he himself, Arjuna and Digambara can each absorb only a third of this deadly ire. To save Arjuna, he enters in spirit into a Peepul tree.

But will not the tree revive again?—asks Krishaketu. Srikrishna assures him that it will, at the healing touch of his greatest bhakta (devotee) on earth. This brings us to the second phase of the episode, which is meant to glorify the bhakta, and thus we are brought back to the story of Vidushaka. When news reaches Vidushaka that Srikrishna would soon grace the capital with his presence, he is afraid that it would spell fresh disaster. He leaves his master abruptly and tinkeroriously (ceremony is never in his element) and repairs with his wife to where the dead tree stands, shunned by man as haunted. As he sits under the tree, he bandages his eyes, fearing that, if not man, Srikrishna might appear. Suddenly the tree revives. The wife wonders, but little knows that the miracle has happened at the holy touch of her husband.

With a bold touch, Girish makes the Vidushaka see the Lord who comes in the guise of an old Brahmin. It does not take Vidushaka long to recognise him. But he would not open his eyes so long as he wore the guise of an old Brahmin, for it was in this guise that he craved for a feast on the flesh of Krishaketu. Nor would he open them if he appeared as the god with four hands, for even in that universally adored form he not only preserves but also destroys. He would open his eyes if he appears as he did in Brajo, flute in hand with Radha on his left—the form in which the Lord is all love. Srikrishna remonstrates, Vidushaka persists, and in the tussle the bhakta wins. The story of Vidushaka, which runs parallel to the story of Niladhawa, is not introduced as a mere playful diversion. Girish has a deeper motive. Vidushaka, whose life preaches the Vaishnava faith in the abounding grace of the Holy Name, realises the Lord through simple faith. But such faith is rare.

The two dominant traits in Prabira are reverence for parents and consciousness—of his dignity as Kshatriya prince. He accepts the proud challenge of the Pandavas not in a spirit of bravado but with full knowledge of the risk it involves. Not all the entreaties of his bonny wife can shake him from his

purpose. Yet when his father commands that he should return the horse, he submits. But with such ignominy he cannot live in the society of man. He comes to seek farewell of his mother. Jana too has the misgivings of the mother's heart. Prabira reminds her that she got him as a gift from goddess Ganga; would she not get angry if, like a coward, he shrinks from the fight? Jana sees determination in his face. The Kshatriya mother in her wakes up.

What havoc he works in the enemy's rank in the first day's fight may be guessed from the despairing confessions of Bheema, Brishaketu and Anushalwa. (Act II, Sc. 7). But the highest tribute comes from Arjuna himself when he meets the bereaved father. (Act IV, Sc. 3). He tells he had vowed not to fall back even though Yama (Death) came as adversary. But his pride has been humbled by his worthy son, who has stripped him of his glory as Vijay (the victorious). But when the glory of Prabira is at the apex, things are shaping themselves for his downfall. The situation is full of dramatic possibilities and the skilled artist exploits them in full. Prabira is doubly a sinner. He forgets his mother for the pleasure of the senses and he parts with the arms and armour, which he thinks are gifts from Ganga at the importunities of the siren who tempts him. But if he sins, he pays for it with his life.

When Prabira and Arjuna engage in deadly fight, the issue is not hard to predict for even the god Shiva helps Arjuna through Nandi. Yet the epic description of the fight and specially Brishaketu's sudden announcement that two frenzied women are rushing towards the battlefield keep us in suspense till the end. As Srikrishna tells Brishaketu, he is himself worried, for if the mother and the son meet and the son bows to the mother, the spell would break and Prabira would regain the strength of Shiva. It is to guard against such eventuality that Srikrishna had instructed Bheema to post vigilant army at the city gates. (Act III, Sc. 3). This is perhaps the highest flight of poetic imagination in the glorification of motherhood.

Though Prabira is a worthy adversary of Arjuna, there is a striking difference between the two. Prabira is self-conscious and relies on his own strength, while Arjuna is characterised by absolute reliance on Srikrishna.

Madanmunjari is the devoted wife whose husband is all the world for her. Swaha is equally devoted to her husband but she has not to face such ordeals as her sister-in-law. The difference in their reactions to the offers of disguised Srikrishna is interesting study. Swaha scents mischief from the beginning. She can view things more or less dispassionately. Madanmunjari, on the other hand, is emotionally strung and the idea that mother Ganga has helped her husband with these weapons at this crisis so possess her that judgment is lost and she dismisses her fears lightly when Swaha whispers them to her.

Jana is pre-eminently the mother. The other trait of her character is devotion to Ganga. She is the heroic mother of the heroic son. At midnight hour she visits the soldiers' camp and rouses their drooping spirit and at dawn sends her son to battle. Yet when the victor son does not return after the day's fight, the mother's mind is tormented with doubts and fears. She suspects that her son has been bewitched by a sorceress. But unlike Madanmunjari, she is not unnerved. Agni fears that Shankara is displeased and he advises Jana to propitiate Durga to please the god. It is idle to speculate what

might happen if Jana agreed. But she rejects the idea scornfully, for is not Durga co-wife of mother Ganga, whom she devoutly worships? She finds her son, but, alas, too late. And now when she knows the worst, she has no tears in her eyes; tears are consumed by wrath. The one passion of her life is vengeance on Arjuna.

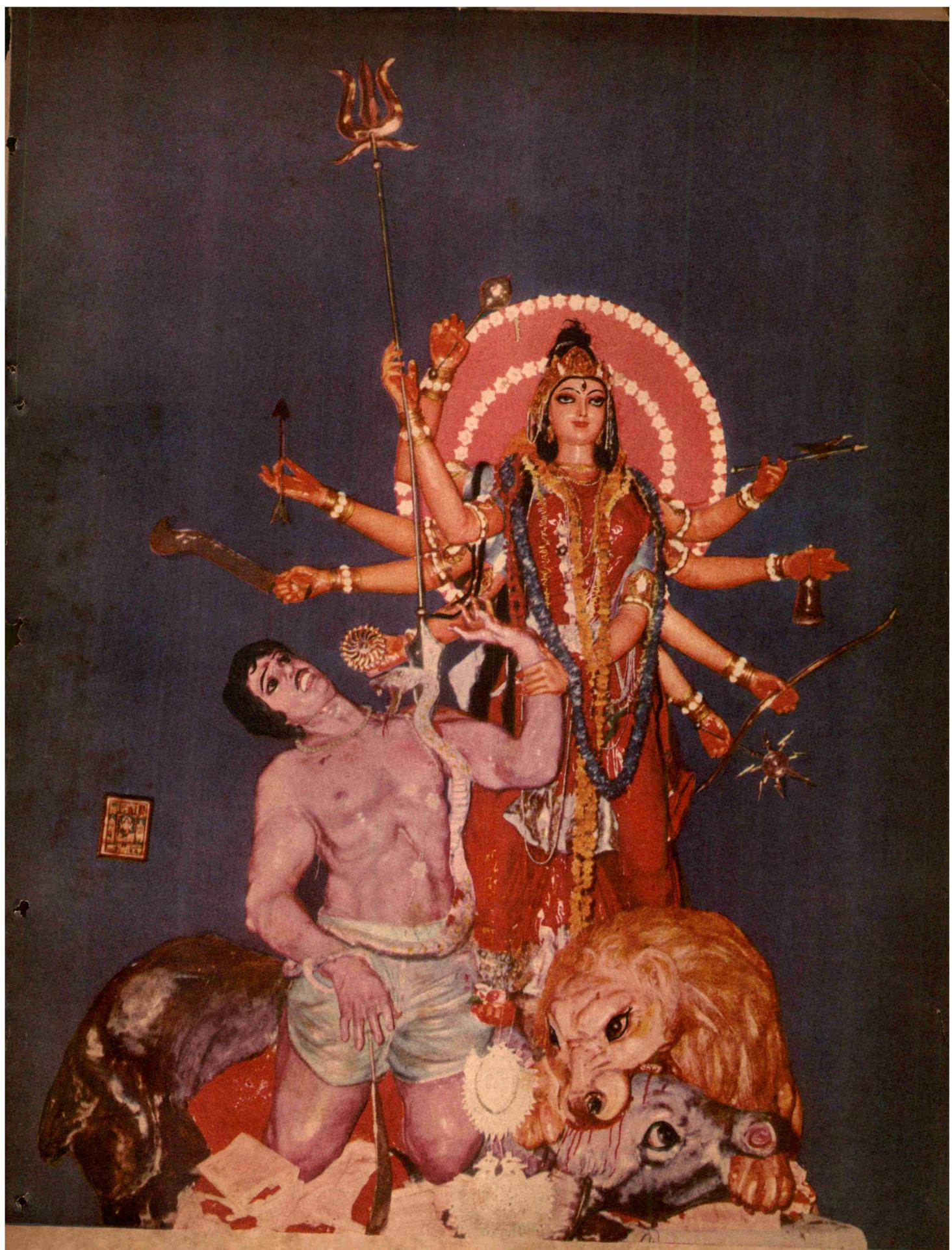
Niladhwa is a studied contrast to Jana and the contrast is emphasised even at the start when Jana rebuts every argument of Niladhwa against a conflict with the Pandavas. The truth is that the old king lacks the martial spirit of the Kshatriya and his deep devotion to Srikrishna altogether disarms him. He yields because he is too weak before the dashing personality of his Amazon-like queen. Jana's regret when she visits the soldiers' camp at night, that the king is not there to boost their morale tells its own tale. Even more significant is the fact that the king is not there to bless his son when he goes to fight.

The contrast is even more marked after the fall of their son. Niladhwa's first impulse is to go and give fight, not for revenge—revenge is not in his element—but to find death at the hand of him who has slain his son. And when the victor comes suing for peace and announces that Srikrishna is eager to meet him, the prospect of seeing Narayan in human form so overwhelms him that he almost forgets his tragedy and proclaims that the city be gaily decorated. Jana, on the other hand, contemptuously turns her eyes from such festive preparations and when her stirring appeal and sharp rebukes alike leave him cold, she wildly scours the country round in vain pursuit of revenge.

When Srikrishna comes before Niladhwa, his long-cherished yearning is fulfilled. Yet a question teases him. He asks Agni why such gloom has been cast over the land at the approach of the Lord. Agni explains: "Realise, O King, the infinite loving-kindness of the Lord. He takes each one unto Him through the path to which he is truly inclined. Prabira sought glory in life and the world will now sing his glory, for the redoubtable Arjuna could not defeat him in fair combat. He fell fighting like a hero and the Lord stood by him as he shook off the mortal frame. Death is inevitable, but glory such as his is rare." "But," asks Niladhwa, "why poor Jana did not have sight of the Lord?" "The good Jana", replies Agni, "knew no other deity than Ganga. Bereft of her son, to her the world is void and she is plaintively calling mother Ganga, who is also eagerly waiting to clasp her in her embrace. The Lord, of whom the universe is the visible manifestation, gives each one the end that is most desired." (Act. V, Sc. 2).

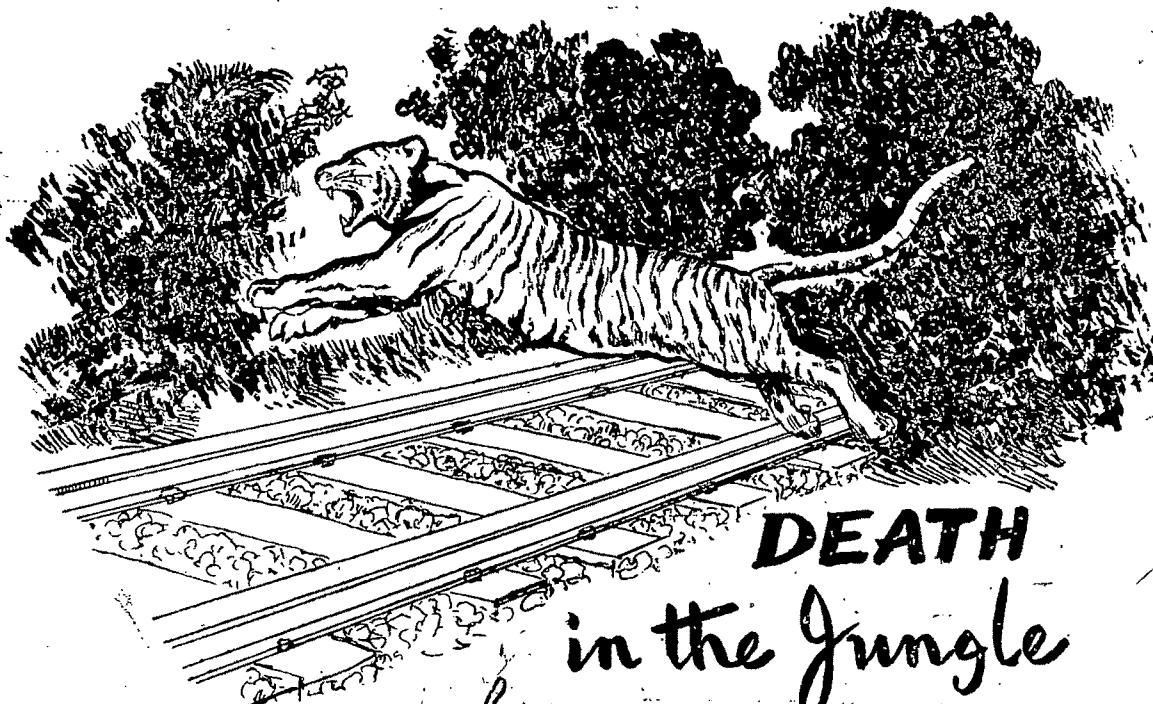
But since philosophical dissertations can scarcely soothe the aching heart, Niladhwa cries in agony. He gets no response, for time is not yet ripe. In fullness of time, when with the death of Jana all his ties on earth are snapped, Srikrishna comes with the message of abiding peace. He gives Niladhwa the gift of divine vision and a side scene discovers the snowy heights of Kailash with the Ganga flowing below. In Kailash, Prabira and Madanmunjari are seen worshipping Shiva and Parvati. They remember not what happened on earth.

As the curtain drops, we wake up as from a dream and ask ourselves: Which is the reality—the sudden storm that wrecked the family of Niladhwa or the sight of calm in Kailash where no sorrow or sadness is?



THE IMAGE OF GODDESS DURGA : COLLEGE SQUARE, 1968

Colour Transparency : by PROFULLA MITRA.



DEATH in the Jungle

by
DHIRENDRA NARAYAN ROY



HEN I open up the store of recollections, I find that jungles and forests and their inhabitants have all come together to lend me a sense of oneness with them. My breath has contributed to theirs and theirs in turn have supplied life-breath to me. It is for this that I pine for the wood life so keenly.

Some incidents stand out in my memory. Imagine three men on the back of an elephant without a howdah and a tiger tied to the cushion over it. The tiger was a striped one hanging its head and tail by the sides of the elephant followed by another such beast. On the howdah, two of us.

But then that is a tale of the remote past. India was under British rule.

The jungle of the Duars was alluring to me. I had been there so many times. The roads and highways were familiar. From Calcutta by Darjeeling Mail to Parbatipur junction, and from there by Dalsingpara Passenger to Rajabhatkhawa—this in short was the journey. Detraining at Rajabhatkhawa station, one will stand face to face with an immense greenness lying at the feet of the lofty Himalayas. On both sides of the railway line dense forests stretch miles after miles. It appears that there is no entrance to them when viewed from a distance. But on going near them, a few human tracks are noticed.

Rajabhatkhawa is the railway station. From here one line goes to Jainti and the other to Dalsingpara. The place is noted for its timber business, and trades people participate in the annual auction sales of the forests. They cut the trees,

make railway sleepers out of the logs of sal and also use them for building houses.

The market is really small with a few shops. The bigger market is at Damanpur. It has nevertheless a post office and a forest office, some way off into the jungles. By the side of the forest office lies the residence of the Extra Assistant Conservator of Forests.

The Post Office is a tin-shed. Behind the post office are the residential quarters of the Post Master, the clerk, the peon and the night-guard. All are bungalow-pattern houses—the rooms are built on high wooden platforms. The reason is that the place is infested with wild animals and specially wild elephants.

Rajabhatkhawa—the name is rather peculiar. It is said that in a battle between the Maharaja of Cooch Behar and Bhutan, the Maharaja was defeated and made a captive. While he was being led to Bhutan, the Maharaja stopped here and had his lunch. From that the place was called Rajabhatkhawa i.e. the place where the Raja ate rice.

It was customary with the people to close the doors and windows before evening for fear of wild beasts. It was the month of Aghrahayana and winter was not far away. It was five o'clock in the afternoon. Suddenly there was a thudding noise on the verandah of the Post Office and with the noise a great roar at once bespoke the onslaught of a tiger. Then one saw the huge head of the animal and its striped body which sped across the railway lines and disappeared into the forest.

The news spread like wildfire. The Conservator was no doubt the Extra Assistant but he was also a full-fledged Sahib. His pipe was held between his lips. He always appeared to be in the

best of spirits. He was an expert hunter and was seen at the spot.

The animals of these places are carefree and reckless. It was a forest region and the denseness of the sal trees was responsible for their impious movements and their sovereignty over all.

One could find very large pythons even on roads. The old sal logs which had long holes would sometimes be chosen by these serpents as resting places. These sal logs are rejects and are ultimately burnt down. It happened once that a python got into such a log on which sat a few labourers; while smoking a labourer sitting at the edge of a log tried to put out the fire of his bidi by rubbing it against the edge of the wood. Alas; it was not wood but the tail of a python that had come out of the hole. The result was that the python gave the log of wood such a swing that the labourers who sat on it were toppled down. Such danger is rampant in the Duars and it is not possible to say what will happen the next moment.

Biresh Munshi, the Extra Assistant Conservator of Forests at Rajabhatkhawa was an officer of much importance. His style was conspicuous and his ways were rather gaudy; more anglicised were his habits and manners. It was really difficult to differentiate him from an Englishman. He had a grand figure with a bright reddish complexion, a sharp nose, back-brushed hair and a moustache neatly pruned in the shape of a butterfly. When he spoke, he used Latin and French words at random. When he was at the office, everyone was alert. When he was out on inspection, the ranger, the forester and even the forest guards trembled before him.

It was a day that dawned with some consternation. I woke up early in the morning and was sitting on the outer verandah of the bungalow. Opening the door, Biresh found me and expressed his wishes

—Bon jour.

I returned his wishes

—May your Good Morning turn out to be the same.

The news of the tiger is ready at hand. Biresh was loud in his assurances: There's no doubt about it.

A man of sixty years with grey flowing beard made his appearance and waited upon Biresh.

—Morning tea—be quick.

I asked Biresh about the man:

—Is he your attendant-in-chief?

—Yes, he is my valet de chambre.

Then giving me a scrutinizing look, he remarked:

—I see, you have had a Grande Toilette, eh!

—You are perfectly right.

Just at this time, Mr. Gulbahadur Thapa, the forester stood saluting before us and the loud laughter of Biresh was suspended forthwith.

—Welcome, Mr. Thapa. But, why so early in the morning? Is there any urgent work?

Thapa flung himself into a chair:

—Yes Sir, a most important piece of news indeed. Last night there was an attack on the coolie bustee by the side of the forest by a tiger. He escaped with a calf.

The eyes of Biresh glowed, and then with a smile he turned to me.

—How lucky you are! Just see, such tidings this very morning!

Catching hold of his hands, I went on with a sermon:

—It all depends on luck. Failures came indeed on previous occasions when I had chanced to come here. This time, if the tiger meets its end in my

hands, it will be its emancipation from beastly progeny.

—Look here. I don't bother about your salvation or God. You know that I am a fatalist.

—Yes, that I know and for that I pity you.

I mean to say that when a calf has been a prey to a tiger, we must find it somewhere near a stream in the forest. Do you agree?

—Correct. But how would you beat the jungle which is so vast and extensive? Besides the question of making a secluded platform on the branch of a tree is there to be solved—that would not be very easy, I imagine.

Biresh wanted to cut the discussion short and opined:

—I don't care and you too need not worry about it. Just wait and see, I shall hardly take any time to arrange everything.

Turning towards Mr. Thapa, Biresh issued a demi-official order:

—Mr. Thapa, do you remember the name of the jotedai of Garopara? Yes, I remember now—Hajo Prodhan. Will you meet him and as quickly as possible? I am sending a letter to him and you will carry it. Wait for his answer. If you take a cycle, you won't take more than an hour and a half for the return journey.

The able drafting of the letter was proved when Mr. Thapa returned with good tidings from Hajo Prodhan:

—Prodhan is coming with two elephants and he will have his lunch here.

Biresh extended his hand to shake mine; his face grew brighter as he said:

—You see, Hajo Prodhan is an aristocratic fellow. He has extensive cultivations of paddy besides having a few orchards of oranges in the frontiers. Though the show is not so remarkable, he is well-off in his demeanour. He wears a long coat of country-made Muga cloth with tight-fitting trousers, an embroidered cap on his head and a pair of Colapuri Chappals on his feet and carries a short cane with a gold knob. He has a string of precious stones round his neck like a necklace, five rings on his five fingers, all of which have big precious stones. He is very jolly and is greatly attracted to hunting. When he comes, you will see what I mean.

I started making a sketch of Hajo Prodhan in my mind. Still, there was one point left to check.

My friend was very exuberant in testifying to the ability of Hajo Prodhan:

—Oh, certainly, he is a successful hunter. Only the other day, he went out with me and shot down a deer. He can hold a gun.

—Very good. Then let us make him our leader in this tiger-expedition. What do you think?

—What do you mean? Leaving you, an expert hand! Quite an unacceptable idea indeed!

—A shikar is after all a golden uncertainty. No one knows when one will get a grand success and whom fortune will favour.

—I have to go out for a short time and shall be back within an hour. If, in the mean time Hajo Prodhan comes, will you receive him on my behalf? He will require nothing except a pot of raw tea?

—Only tea?

—That's all. Nothing else but be careful, don't make the tea with sugar and milk. Only raw liquor and some salt in a pot. He takes nothing except salt-tea.

It was about 11 O'clock in the morning when His Greatness Hajo Prodhan arrived on elephant back. Behind him was another elephant, bigger in size and elder in age. I gathered that it was a very expert animal in hunting and was indispensable to



It was not wood but the tail of a python

the sahibs who went here to hunt. There was a howdah with railings around it having enough space for four men to sit comfortably. But the elephant on which Hajo Prodhan came had no howdah but had only a guddy fastened to its back by a rope.

Hajo Prodhan did not come alone, he had two companions. One was remarkably lean and thin but tall and the other was fat and short. Both had clothes such as the Paharis wear, rings in their ears and necklaces of coloured stones.

The elephant was made to sit down when Hajo Prodhan and his two companions descended. As I stepped forward to welcome him, Prodhan asked:

—Is the jungle Sahib in?

—Oh, he has just out but will be back in no time. Now come, just a little refreshment—tea etc.

—Oh no, nothing needed. We had that before we came.

The lean tall man however looked uneasy, he touched his throat once and then tried to moisten it by the saliva of his own mouth and then in a cracked voice, he ejaculated:

—Will you kindly let us have some tea?

I failed to realise what he meant.

Hajo Prodhan gave a hearty laugh calling his man utterly rustic, not having the requisite training to move about in enlightened society. He said that his man wanted some tea, that's all.

Tea was served.

Biresh Munshi was also seen at a distance coming with two or three men with long strides. He still held his tobacco pipe between his lips and, swinging his hunter, was saying something to his companions.

Hajo Prodhan went forward to greet him and his wrinkled face glowed with a smile when he said:

—Look, we are in time, you may be sure, as punctual as your watch.

Biresh encouraged him:

—That I know very well. Hajo Prodhan is not only first by name but is also to be reckoned as first in words and work. I presume, there is none like him in this area.

We retired to the verandah but Biresh first of all inspected the two elephants which were then chewing the bunch of Pundi grass in great comfort with their eyes closed.

We started our talk on shikar. Though I had previous knowledge about the forest of that area, it was incomplete. I gathered from the talks of Hajo Prodhan and Biresh that we had to cross the rail line and enter the eastern jungle. First, we shall get a light jungle interspersed with sal trees.

After about a mile, we got a rather thick forest and there was chance of our mission being fulfilled. There were a few cane jungles and other bushes besides a small brook running by. Though shallow, water was always flowing through it.

Biresh had a plan. We have already got the information that the tiger has killed a calf. Consequently, he will take it to the brook—there's no doubt about that. If we don't delay but start by two o'clock, we are sure to reach the place at a time when the beast will be having his nap after a preliminary feast. Let us first go to the spot. I went to the coolie bustee and arranged for the beaters. They will start for the jungle in time and will surround it. The beat will start after our arrival.

Our conference ended. Hajo Prodhan was allotted a separate room. He entered followed by his two companions. Biresh returned to his office work and started drafting a few urgent letters. I had no work in hand. First, I went to see to the feeding of the elephants. Then just as I stepped up on the verandah, I heard a thumping sound from the floor of the room occupied by Hajo Prodhan.

What was it?

The room was closed from within and so I pushed a chair near the door and stood up on it to look through the glass panes when I saw a grand sight. Hajo Prodhan wearing pants lay prostrate on the floor and the two attendants were massaging him violently with oil from a large bowl.

We started at two. Biresh and I were upon the elephant with the howdah and on the other elephant with only a guddy on its back were seated Hajo Prodhan and his two companions. His personal gun looked expensive, and well-kept.

First, we entered the thin sal forest. Biresh led the way.

After proceeding a distance, Hajo Prodhan called out from behind.

—Please sit firmly in the howdah or you may fall down.

This was a signal to us to note that our elephant was stumbling occasionally on the uneven track.

I had not noticed it. I was thinking that if the calf had been lifted by the tiger on the previous night, surely it had not eaten it in a single meal. I knew that in most cases, tigers eat its prey only partially in the first instance and return later to complete its feast. The kill was most likely to be left near water.

So we had to lead our elephant along the side of the brook. I told Biresh and he too held examinations of the surroundings and gave instructions to the driver accordingly.

As we moved some distance, my calculations proved correct. About forty yards from the bed of the river, near a bush, the half-devoured body of the 'kill' lay.

Biresh seemed excited. Shall we wait here or move forward? Yes, there is a possibility of the tiger coming back to this place but there is no certainty as to the time when he would be pleased to come. It may be that he will return before sunset. But I am not in favour of waiting so long. Moreover, though familiar with the forest, I cannot definitely say if a platform could be conveniently built within this short time; it will be wiser to beat the tiger out.

Hajo Prodhan raised an objection, though feeble:

—Sahib, let us wait here. It would be no use getting the elephants into the forest.

—But will the tiger come of itself with its open

breast turned towards us if we simply wait here? It's absurd.

I also agreed with Biresh.

—When the beat will be on, the tiger being driven will either hide inside the bush or will take a run along the bed of the brook and will disappear.

Biresh ordered:

Let us proceed on along the side of the brook and then enter the forest. That's better.

When the front elephant was on the move the rear one grew restive and followed us.

We entered the forest. Just then, the man who was sent by Biresh in charge of the beating squad came running.

—What is it?

—The tiger! I have seen it in a thick bush swinging its tail.

But, what was it, a premonition to attack or retreat?

Whatever it might be—we were quite ready. Hajo Prodhān in the elephant behind us sat up straight with his gun fixed towards the bush and looked at it with all earnestness. It was rather difficult to follow the motive of the tiger. So we were left with no other alternative but to wait and see. Biresh blew his whistle and with it the beat started.

The beaters were advancing towards us closing up the field. By the command of Raghu, the beaters began to surround the bush occupied by the tiger.

It was not possible for the tiger to linger long in his hiding place.

Like a lightning flash, the beast streaked out and sped through the thin patch of wood towards the brook.

I was also ready. In an instant, my Winchester Repeating Rifle sent forth a volume of smoke thundering at the tiger and struck the rear thigh of the beast. The tiger gave out a roar that shook the whole forest.

My shot was not decisive and was struck from an obtuse angle so that the tiger could move on the three legs and was at large in no time.

But where could it go?

The jungle was so thick that nothing could be seen.

Suddenly the elephant gave out an alarming sound and held out its trunk on high which was enough indication that the tiger was nearby. Actually, it came stealthily enough and with a sudden spring lunged on the railing of the howdah. If it could jump at us instead, there would have been no chance for us.

Immediately with the assault of the tiger on us, the elephant raised a tumultuous shriek like the shrill sound of a cracked conch-shell. It gave a shrug of its huge body resulting in a collision between Biresh and myself, the tiger, having its hind leg injured previously with the bullet shot, now glided down to the ground. I was not prepared for this unforeseen guerilla attack.

After that, of course, the tiger had no chance.



TAGORE AND THE TEACHER

By

H. B. MUKHERJEE



In my imagination, "Tagore wrote in one of his last educational writings," I have visualised the Guru at the very centre of the *tapovans* of ancient India.¹ Profoundly influenced as Tagore was by the educational ideals and practices of ancient India, we may take this utterance as reflecting a central aspect of Tagore's own educational philosophy. For Tagore regarded the teacher as by far the most important factor in education, and his educational philosophy may rightly be called largely, if not wholly, teacher-centric.

Tagore, in a sense, considered the teacher as even more important than the pupils. "In the natural course of things," he observed "the water comes first and then comes the fish—it is the presence of the learned men which draws the students around there."² But because our schools and colleges are mere "branding institutions," "we begin from the wrong end—the students come first in our mind, and then we cast about for teachers."³ Tagore, therefore, believed that the finding of real teachers was a thing of primary importance in creating genuine centres of learning.

Similarly, Tagore regarded the teacher as more important than the subjects to be taught. "In merely academical teaching" he said, "we find subjects, but not the man who pursues the subjects, therefore the vital part of education remains incomplete."⁴

Again, according to him, the teacher is more important than the methods of teaching. "In the last analysis." He declared, "we must come to the inevitable conclusion that education can be imparted only by a teacher and never by a method."⁵

One of the main thoughts at the back of these ideas appears to have been that knowledge in order to be living must be acquired from a living source, the human teacher. "Man can learn," he said, "only from a man, just as a water-tank can be filled only with water, a flame can be lit only by a flame, life can be inspired only by life".⁶ Dry and

static learning, which is pedantry, can be acquired from books; but true culture can be acquired only from a human teacher. For "culture grows and moves and multiplies itself in life."⁷ In the *tapovans* of ancient India, as also in the European universities, Tagore pointed out, students obtained the light of knowledge from "the sun of the human relationship" between their teachers and themselves. But teachers in our country in present times, he regretted, had come to be "merely purveyors of book-lore, in whom the paper-God of the bookshop seems to have made himself vocal."⁸ Furthermore, in learning directly from a teacher the pupil also imbibes in the process something which is human in him—"his enthusiasm, his courage, his honesty and his skill."⁹ In short, a teacher, who is not a machine but an active, dynamic human-being imparts to the learning process the dynamic and human quality which cannot be obtained only through books or through mechanical teaching methods.

Close association with noble spirits, leading a simple and pure life and dedicated to the pursuits of knowledge and truth, Tagore maintained, lead the pupils to imbibe something precious for the elevation of their own spirit, which nothing else can impart. Moreover, the love, affection, understanding and sympathy of a human teacher, as of a member of the family, exert a far greater moulding influence on the plastic mind of a child and a youth than any amount of impersonal book-learning. That is why, Tagore persistently pleaded for residential education in the close company of teachers after the pattern of the forest colonies of ancient India. He also considered it a "most valuable feature in the system of education prevailing in his own institution at Santiniketan. Referring to this point, he wrote, "I do not know whether we have succeeded in teaching language or history or geography according to the best and latest methods. But I forgot all other wants because of the satisfying thought that our institution had given a place to something which not many institutions regard as essential, but which is the most important of all".¹⁰

While stressing the central importance of the teacher on the lines indicated above, Tagore also

pointed out a number of qualities that he considered essential for a real teacher, which are as significant as they are instructive.

One point that Tagore made frequently and emphatically is that the teacher himself should be devoted to the pursuit of knowledge and truth along with his pupils. "A most important truth", he said, "which we are apt to forget, is that a teacher can never truly teach unless he is still learning himself. A lamp can never light another lamp unless it continues to burn its own flame. The teacher who has come to the end of his subject, who has no living traffic with his knowledge, but merely repeats his lessons to his students, can only load their minds; he cannot quicken them". 10a "A teacher has no right to teach a subject to others," he asserted elsewhere, "which he does not himself study constantly." 11 "The atmosphere of living aspiration" produced by the devoted pursuit of knowledge by the teachers, in which the students have the good fortune of growing up, was considered by Tagore an indispensable part of real education. This joint 'tapasya' by teachers and pupils for the cultivation of knowledge and truth, he pointed out, was a very valuable aspect of the traditional educational system of India and the European universities.

Tagore stated the same point from a different angle when he asserted that the teacher should first enrich his own mind and spirit before proceeding to enrich those of his pupils. "So long as we shall think," he warned, "that it is we alone who would teach our pupils, would do good to them, we would achieve little results. . . . We have to fill our own wants. We would feel that we have come to receive here and that we should learn at the feet of the Great Master along with our pupils at the same level. Only then shall our efforts bear fruit." Tagore confessed that he realised this truth from his own experience at his institution. 12 He stressed the same point in a letter where he made the interesting plea that the real success and fulfilment of an educational institution consisted in the "spiritual growth of the teacher." "In these things," he wrote, "gain to one's personal self is gain to all, like lighting a lamp which is lighting a whole room". 13

Equating life with education, Tagore stated that they mean "constant progress along the path of one's true interest". 14 He, therefore, affirmed that "the greatest need in our country is to create interest in children from their childhood". 15 But the most essential pre-requisite for attaining this objective, according to him, was that the teacher himself must be genuinely interested in life and his surroundings. Our students were dull and inert, he contended, because our teachers had little genuine interest in men and things". 15

Tagore also maintained that the teacher should impart knowledge not out of any dry sense of duty but in a spirit of joy. His joy in acquiring knowledge is proved by his joy in giving it away. "The teacher's mind", he said, "is giving itself away, because it is finding itself every moment". There is spontaneous joy, he explained, in the true intercourse of minds. "Those who are inspired only by a sense of duty and not by the spirit of joy," he declared, "should find a different vocation". 17

Tagore also stressed the teacher's role in producing an inspiring atmosphere of creativeness for his pupils through his own ceaseless creative activity in various directions. Nothing, according to him, is more fructifying from the pupils' point of view than the direct and living contact with the teacher's creative activity in the fields of art, literature, science and philosophy. That is why, he said,

he staked all his resources in creating "an atmosphere of ideas" in his institution through the multifarious creative activities of its teachers and inmates, including his own.

In short, the real function of the teacher, as Tagore viewed it, is not so much to impart information and knowledge as to communicate life and love. It is by giving away, without any reserve, the best that is in him of his head and heart that the teacher can awaken the best in his pupils. Speaking of Acharya P. C. Roy, he said, "He has inspired thought in his pupils; he has not simply imparted knowledge; he has given himself away, through which gift the pupil has found himself". 18

What deep significance Tagore attached to the role of the teacher will be evident from his contention that the teacher should substitute the mother at school. In this the teacher has to perform a vital biological function. Weaned away from the mother's sheltering care, a child is apt to receive a sudden shock through his first contact with the harsh realities of life. It is for the teacher to rehabilitate the child in his new world of experience through his sympathetic understanding and love which the child has been accustomed to receive from his mother; without which intellectual instability and emotional maladjustment may follow. 19 It is this "unrestricted human relationship" that Tagore considered of priceless value for the healthy upbringing of children at school as well as at home. 20

From the above central principle follow many qualities that Tagore regarded as essential in a real teacher. The teacher should, thus, approach the young with a feeling of respect, even of reverence, as the symbol and promise of future fulfilment. "They alone deserve to take charge of the students," he affirmed forcefully, "who can easily respect those who are younger than them in age and inferior in knowledge and power, who know that charity is the adornment of the strong, who do not feel ashamed to regard even the pupils as friends". 21

Tagore repeatedly warned that the teacher should never display, nay, should not even feel—any sense of superiority before his pupils. He should, rather, feel that he and his pupils are "like wayfarers travelling the same path together" in the common pursuit of knowledge and life. 22 Tagore insisted that the teacher should never keep himself at a distance from his pupils through any false sense of dignity or prestige. "It is not possible," he wrote, "to awaken the spirit through keeping such a distance. It may help in efficient administration, but it creates a gap in some vital sense". 23

Tagore even made the point that a real teacher is a child at heart, with the simplicity, spontaneous joviality, and the sense of wonder of the child ever awake in him. "That the teacher is unfit to take charge of children," he declared categorically, "in whom the spirit of the child has become completely dried up In a born teacher the eternal child spontaneously comes out at the call of young children; from behind the thick voice of maturity bursts out the sprightly laughter of innocence". 24

Tagore's conception of the teacher's proper approach to the important problem of discipline should have been suggested by the foregoing observations. It needs only to be stressed that Tagore attached signal importance to patience, sympathy, and understanding on the part of the teacher in handling his pupils, specially during the momentous years of adolescence. Adolescence, being a period of transition, he pointed out, is marked by

emotional aberrations and sudden emotional outbursts. A wise teacher will always view such occurrences with insight and understanding and will "allow them to pass away like botams and jetsams in flood-water, for if they are dragged up, they create nuisance." 25 A good preceptor, therefore, regards his pupils with respect, draws them near with love, "removes their pitfalls with forgiveness, and patiently endeavours to elevate their mental faculties towards higher values". 26 Referring to this fundamental quality of patience, Tagore stated in clear, forceful words, "Last of all I shall speak of that which I consider to be the greatest and which is also the rarest. They only deserve to be teachers who are patient. This patience is natural only to those who have a spontaneous affection for children". 27

That Tagore had hard words for teachers who are harsh disciplinarians would follow naturally from the above. A rude, repressive policy, he contended, degrades the teacher. The mute subjection of his pupils aggravates his autocratic propensities, and their silent contempt also spoils the proper atmosphere for good work. Tagore dubbed such teachers as "born tyrants", better fitted to be jailwarders or drill-sergeants, rather than teachers. He also regarded such cruelties as a confession of inefficiency, and even cowardice. "Whenever there are instances of the administration of severe and maximum punishment to children," he declared, "often the teachers are mainly responsible. As they are feeble-minded, they seek to make their task easy through severity and rudeness." 28

What Tagore has to say about celebrated teachers should be an interesting and illuminating query in this context. Of the teachers of the great Buddhist Universities of Nalanda, Vikramshila etc., quoting Hiu-en-Tsang, he has written, "Their fame spread far and wide; their character was pure and unimpeachable. They observed the code of ethics with genuine respect. In other words, the entire country and the pupils from distant foreign lands honoured the learning which these teachers were entrusted to propagate; it was their responsibility to uphold that honour brightly, not through the intellect alone, but through their character, their "tāpasya". 29 Tagore has also referred, on many an occasion, to his teacher, Prof. Henry Morley of London University; he has pointed out how the venerable teacher would teach literature with his entire soul, entering into the spirit of the work he was teaching and not acting like "an embodiment of cheap annotation". 30 Tagore's occasional references to some teachers at his own Santiniketan School are also significant. He has paid rich tributes to Satis Chandra Roy who was a wonderful teacher of literature, being a passionate lover of literature himself, and fully represented Tagore's idea of a teacher-devotee. 31 Of Jagadananda Roy, the science teacher of his school, Tagore has written no less eloquently. He has referred to his genuine love of teaching, his unreserved and complete self-sacrifice before his pupils, his deep and tender affection for children, and his removal of all artificial distance between himself and his students. 32 About Ajit Kumar Chakravarti Tagore has written that he had unhesitatingly thrown open the doors of the treasure of his knowledge to his pupils and never kept aloof from them out of vanity for his position as a teacher". 33 Mohitlal Sen and Narendralal Bose also had the similar distinction of giving themselves away entirely for the cause of their students and taking keen and friendly interest in their personal problems of joy and sorrow. 34

It should not be without interest to note in this connection what Tagore himself was as a practical educator in his own school. An old student of the

Santiniketan School records that "Tagore always sought to activate in his pupils their independent power of thinking; in which work the writer "had never seen any sign of impatience or displeasure". 35 Another old student, testifying to the remarkable conscientiousness and patience with which Tagore approached his class-work, writes, "Unbelievably hard was his labour, for most meticulously did he work out his lesson-notes during the night preceding the class, and with infinite patience led the boys through their work next morning". 36 Referring to the atmosphere of freedom and liveliness in his classes, the same observer writes that "an atmosphere of freedom and an unflagging inspiration in the students growing out of a corporate sense of creative activity prevailed constantly. . . It never for a moment sank into an ebb of lifelessness. . . Petty problems of the so-called class discipline hardly ever raised their thorny heads in his robust presence. In that free and healthy atmosphere that put no artificial limit to pupil's self-expression they appeared to be almost fore-doomed. As one of his former pupils at the Santiniketan School, I must humbly bear witness to one fact here of no mean educational value, that never for a single occasion did the savage, or should I say, the 'non-civilized' in the child suffer any rude chastisement at his hands." 37 Those who are familiar with Tagore's literary works know what exquisitely tender and multi-coloured emotions Tagore experienced in relation to the child. Those who know him closely know how happy he felt in the company of children, to whom he was always accessible even amidst his most pressing pre-occupations. Indeed, there was no greater relaxation for him from the exhausting activities of his busy life, as he himself has recorded in some letters, than to be in the company of his child-masters ('sisu-maharaj') and to devote his days to their service. 38 It is needless to point out how these sterling qualities fit in with the picture of the ideal teacher as Tagore conceived it.

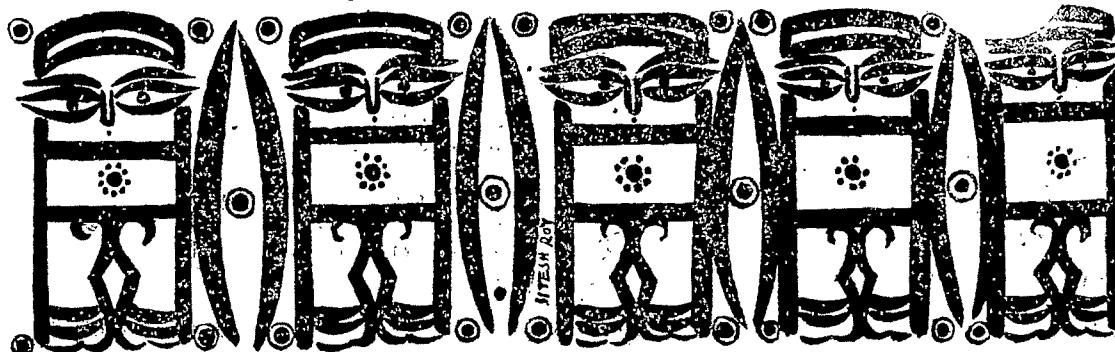
The above portrait of a true teacher as delineated by Tagore is, no doubt, idealistic, and the requirements that he laid down for the attainment of the teacher may appear somewhat exacting judged by usual standards. One need not, however, be apologetic about the matter for standards are always set high when one is dealing with ideals. This is not to say, however, that in laying down his conditions Tagore lacked the sense of the proper perspective. On the contrary, he himself admitted that all teachers are not saints, and ideal teachers cannot be had merely for the asking. "We can get any number of school-masters through advertisement," he wrote, "but the guru cannot be made to order". 39 But he also pointed out that we failed to get the best out of whatsoever teachers we had under the limitation of circumstances through our wrong approach to them. We receive from an object, Tagore contended, only what we really demand of it, and nothing more. Our schoolmasters give very little of themselves because we expect very little from them. "We use a schoolmaster in such a way" he wrote, "that very little of his mind and heart is brought to bear on his task. A schoolmaster can be manufactured if we attach a cane and a little brain to a gramophone! But if the same person be placed on the high altar of a guru, then all the powers of his mind and heart will naturally flow towards his disciples". 40 Tagore also admitted that under the conditions of modern life a teacher had perforce to sell his knowledge. But even in this unwholesome situation, he pointed out, a teacher would give more than money could buy, only if he were installed in the high station of a guru. There-

fore, the first and foremost thing that is necessary according to Tagore, to get the best out of our teachers even as they are to rehabilitate them in the position of honour and esteem which time-old Indian tradition has always given to them.

It may be pointed out at the end that the signal importance that Tagore attached to the teacher in the scheme of education is not only in line with Indian traditions, but it is also supported by recent trends in educational thinking. One welcome development in modern education is the growing distrust of fetish regarding the method of teaching that characterised education in earlier decades and the increasing realisation of the significance of the role of the teacher. "In the last resort?", writes Prof. Adams in this context, "methods must stand or fall by their suitability to the person who adopts them".⁴¹ The verdict of the Mudaliar Secondary Education Commission is all the more corroborative. "We are . . . convinced", it runs, "that the most important factor in the contemplated educational reconstruction is the teacher—his personal qualities, his educational qualifications, his professional training, and the place he occupies in the school as well as in the community. . . . We would like to reiterate that the whole question of educational reconstruction hinges on the success of the Department and the community in winning over the whole-hearted co-operation of the teachers. For this purpose the necessary climate of opinion must be created".⁴²

It is, indeed, gratifying to find that one of the fundamental aspects of Tagore's educational philosophy, namely, stressing the central significance of the teacher in the educational process, has found recognition in the judgment of the most authoritative educational opinion in the country and is, let us hope, on its way to fulfilment.

1. "Asramer Siksha", Siksha, 1351 B.S. ed, Vol. I. p. 331.
2. The Centre of Indian Culture, 1921, pp. 23-24.
3. I bid., p. 24.
4. "An Eastern University", Creative Unity, 1925, p. 188.
5. "Siksavidhi", Siksha, 1342 B.S. ed., p. 284.
6. Ibid., 285.
7. The Centre of Indian Culture, 1921, p. 15.
8. Ibid., p. 16.
9. "An Eastern University", Creative Unity, p. 188.
10. Visva-Bharati, 1358 B.S. p. 90.
- 10a. Ibid., p. 186.
11. Visva-Bharati Patrika, 1349 B.S. p. 340.
12. "Dharma-Siksha", Siksha, 1351 B.S. edition, Vol. I. pp. 153-54.
13. Letter to Frederick Bose, quoted in K.S.R. Shastri, Sir Rabindranath Tagore, Ganesh & Co. Madras, 1916, p. 531.
14. Visva-Bharati Patrika, Aagrahayan, 1349 B.S. p. 339.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
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19. "My School", Personality, pp. 112-114.
20. "The Schoolmaster", Modern Review, October, 1924.
21. "Chhatra-sasan-tantra", Siksha, 1357 B.S. Edition, Vol. I. p. 214.
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24. "Asramer Siksha", Siksha, 1351 B.S. edition, Vol. I. p. 332.
25. "Chhatra-sasan-tantra", "Siksha, 1351 B.S. edition, Vol. I. p. 212.
26. Ibid., pp. 214-215.
27. "Asramer Siksha", Siksha, 1351 B.S. edition, Vol. I. p. 337.
28. Ibid., p. 337.
29. "Visvavidyalayer Rup," Siksha, 1342 B.S. edition, p. 221.
30. Ibid., pp. 233-234.
31. Asramer Rup O Vikas, 1348 B.S. p. 11.
32. Ibid., pp. 11-12.
33. Ibid., pp. 12-1.
34. Ibid., pp. 13.
35. Pramathanath Bisi, Rabindranath O Santiniketan, 1357 B.S. p. 146.
36. Nirmal Ch. Chatterjee, "Rabindranath as a teacher in Santiniketan", Education, Lucknow, May 1942.
37. Ibid.
38. Chithi-Patra, Vol. v, 1352 B.S., pp. 253-254.
39. Chithi-Patra, Vol. v, 1352 B.S., pp. 253-254.
39. "Siksha-Samasya", Siksha, 1342 B.S. edition, p. 59.
40. Ibid. p. 60.
41. Educational Theories, Ch. V.
42. Report of the Secondary Education Commission, 1953, pp. 155-164.
42. Report of the Secondary Education Commission, 1953, pp. 155-164.





By GORA GUPTA



HERE was a man who kept a dog. He kept a dog because he could not muster enough courage to keep a wife. And on the dog he poured such lavish praises as, "Oonkie Doonkie", "Odgie Podgie", and of course "Dooly Wooly". The dog's name was, however, Cutie. Cutie was always extravagantly perfumed by his master and kissed regularly on the nose. He also held his tail. On festive occasions his ears were affixed with a pink ribbon with green polka-dots. Whenever his ears drooped, and they drooped quite occasionally the ribbon fell, and it was duly picked up and put in its rightful place.

The man in question did not give something to his dog which common practice and convention would have forced him to give to his wife, and that was clothes. Cutie did not seem to resent it and proudly exhibited his nudity, ribbon and all.

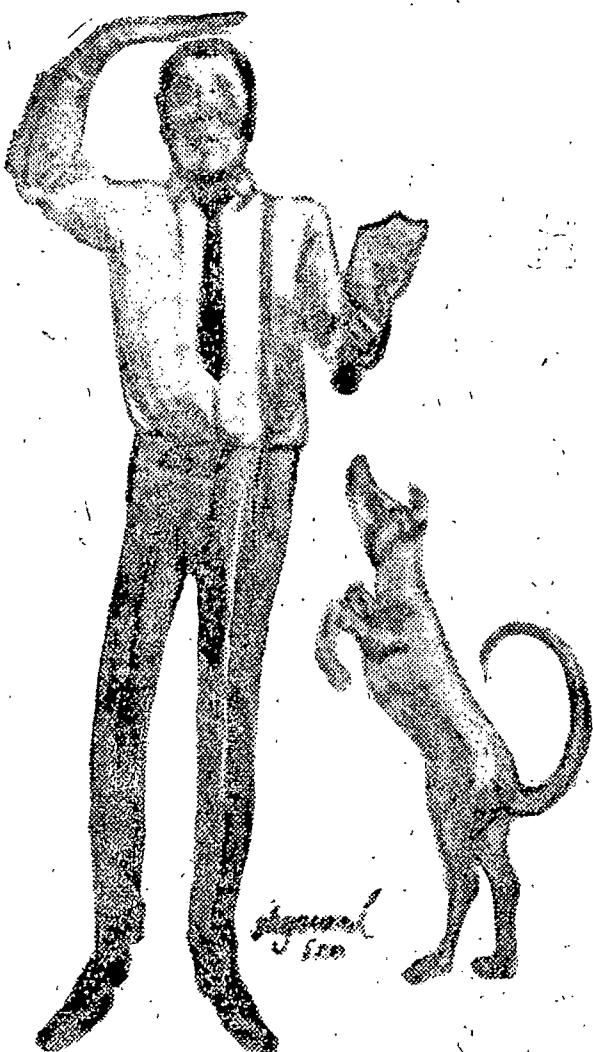
The dog led a dog's life. He slept on the door mat, ate four meals a day and snarled at all guests. He was too lazy to do anything else. Yes, he was a lazy, sleepy, dog. He practically took no exercise and thoroughly disliked the ball act. When a ball was thrown he only looked up dolefully sending his master on all fours looking for the ball under the sofa.

We were, however, talking about the man and not about the dog. With due apologies we concen-

trate our attention on our hero, Mr. Bimswinkle. Mr. Bimswinkle was a confirmed bachelor as the above paragraphs indicate. He did not like the idea of keeping a wife. A dog was enough. Much better in fact. Very skilfully he managed to unearth striking similarities between his dog and any old wife. The dog and a wife alike, welcomed his departure from the house, resented tobacco smoke and abhorred feminine company.

With astounding ingenuity, he took out glaring points in which his dog would surpass a wife. He could not chase him with a broom, snatch his newspaper and pick his pockets. Therefore, he was quite content with life and looked upon the world benevolently and thoroughly endorsed the laissez-faire attitude, as far as his domestic life was concerned.

But such a man, immune apparently to marriage, was struck unheralded by love. He met love in the street corner as is usually the case. A striking metamorphosis came over him, and his friends, not to mention Cutie, discovered it. It was a mystery, they felt, that a detective of some repute could solve. Mr. Bimswinkle spent hours in front of the mirror, now smiling, now laughing, now patting his hair, feeling his muscles, measuring his chest and height. In addition to this, he took a deep interest in astronomy, i.e. stars and the moon. He took undue interest in nature and praised everything from a girl's eyelashes to the wing of a common moth.



...measuring his chest and height.

The name of the girl was Peggy. She was fat, round tall, rotund and robust as her name suggests. A distinctly beautiful girl, she smelt of corn-flour and chocolate with a whiff of doughnuts. She was a very accomplished lady and knew all the fine arts of the kitchen. This is the girl for me, thought Mr. Bimswinkle. Wisdom and caution seemed to have been scattered to the four winds.

Peggy treated him with tolerance, being the daughter of a clergyman. But it should not be forgotten that her mother had direct Saxon warrior blood in her, and the above quality of 'blood' unadulterated, flowed in Peggy's veins too. All said and done, she was a girl of limited tolerance and unlimited pugilistic tendencies. Peggy worked in a bakery which consequently became the favourite haunt of our hero.

One day Mr. Bimswinkle was heard saying to his dog, "Listen, pal, I admit that a dog is a man's best friend. I never argued with you on the point, did I?" Cutie merely cocked his eyebrow. Mr. Bimswinkle continued, not that the contraction of the ocular muscles gave him any indication to continue. "But now you see, my own little, little, Odgie, Podgie, I'm in love."

"So," thought Cutie, "that's what you are driving at, you flea faced, cockroach chewer, star chasing protege of a protoplasm."

"I'm going to make her the mistress of this house."

"With me as master, I don't mind," yapped Cutie.

"We'll all get on fine together. She'll give you buns, pastries and all the niceties an accomplished lady like her can give."

Cutie gave a God forbid groan. He had a vision of all that an accomplished lady could do. She would take him out for walks, put him to bed, bang him if he overslept and all the rest of it.

"We'll make a jolly good team", said Mr. Bimswinkle.

"So what do you expect me to do, strike myself up gumtree? Don't you see that two is company, three is a crowd?"

"Till then," and with an affectionate pat Mr. Bimswinkle left Cutie to his thoughts.

We shall not go into what Cutie thought, as his train of thought was not cohesive. He had a presentiment of a catastrophe. All allowances should be made for the lack of mental equilibrium. On Cutie's part, considering Mr. Bimswinkle's plan of action. Our own Mr. Bimswinkle also believed in tonics and now more so. With a liberal dose of one such tonic he proceeded Peggywards. The name of the tonic has been withheld as we do not wish to advertise.

Mr. Bimswinkle, the picture of confidence, strength and perfection stepped on to the street, and immediately broke into a reckless fox-trot. Then thoroughly refreshed he strode towards the bakery, brandishing his arm at every passerby, and gnashing his side teeth when he passed any girl. He was sure he looked handsome and dangerous just like any other romantic hero. Mr. Bimswinkle, incidentally, had been reading fiction. Ultimately with a Red Indian whoop he entered the bakery. Alas! at this very crucial juncture his courage failed him. He shuffled upto Peggy who had rolled up her forearms and was busy baking. After a mumbled greeting he felt at a loss for words.

"I say, Peggy," says our hero.

"Yes", says his betrothed.

"You know, Peggy?" gulped Mr. Bimswinkle.
"Well?"

"I mean to say...."

"Have a doughnut."

Some training from her clergyman father had penetrated into her. With the utmost control she produced this kind of hospitality.

Speech was thus temporarily halted. Hastily he swallowed his doughnut. Measly waxy stuff, he thought. By this time he had gained his presence of mind due to an influx of courage which came into him with the doughnut.

"Peggy, I lo."

"Liked the doughnut?" interrupted Peggy.

"Ah, yes, yes.... of course."

"Then pay 20 Cent and get out", her militant Saxon blood said.

He did not wish to stay there without her consent, so he hastily prepared to vanish. As he opened the door, a man entered through it with red geraniums in his hand, a wild expression in his eyes. He had a vile face furnished with viler moustaches. The look on his face was akin to his own when he had entered the bakery. His suspicion was aroused and he followed him. He saw Peggy roughly receiving the flowers and gruffly answering his question. She generally seemed to resent his appearance.

"So", thought our hero. "Peggy has another courtier, and he is troubling her."

Gallantly he goes up and socks our villain right out of the picture, then strange but true—gets socked by Peggy right out of the bakery.

Before he blacked out, he heard her say, "You rat faced, bleary eyed, pig brained son of a bed-worn, how dare you touch my husband."

LOVE-POETRY OF THE ENGLISH ROMANTICS

By SANTOSH CHAKRABARTI



sience of the most exalted and ecstatic emotion, called Love.

Shelley, who in life always bubbled with passion, says in "Invocation": "I love Love—though he has wings; And like light can flee."

To Shelley it is not only evanescent, but vicious because it is a cloying emotion. In a beautiful contrast between the Skylark's sacrosanct love and human love's sad satiety the poet says: "Shadow of annoyance; Never came near thee: Thou lovest; but ne'er knew love's sad satiety."

But whatever feeling of saturation love may bring to one, it cannot plunge the poet into despondency. In one of the most "urbane" (Donald Davie in "Shelley's Urbanity") poems Shelley says to Harriet, his first wife, though in the twilight days of their love: "Oh, deign a nobler pride to prove; And pity if thou canst not love."

So love's sad satiety cannot depress the poet. The aspects of his lady-love that can make the poet so complacent are her "look of love", "gentle words," (To Harriet), and sweet "kiss" (*Love's Philosophy*). So in spite of Mr. Stopford Brooke's comments to the contrary, one finds instances in Shelley's love-verses that he did "deal with flesh and blood", though Keatsian sensuousness is a far cry from Shelley's pronouncements of passion.

In "*Love's Philosophy*" Shelley's idiom seems to be one of emotional commingling between two souls just as "the fountains mingle with the river/And the rivers with the ocean," but it is more of a conventional pastiche than a well-enunciated philosophical of love. A more full-fledged theoretical diagnosis of love is found in *The Flight of Love* where he seems to be addressing the God of Love in the following tone: "You are always complaining about

ITH their characteristic dissatisfaction for the unbridgeable gap between the ideal and its achievement—between the desire of the moth and the distance of the star or the unending race of the night for the morrow—the English Romantic poets cannot but see the trans-

human frailty, but if what you want is stability, why do you choose the fraailer of two hearts to come first and to linger in longest? You are supposed to be a noble creature, and your nest is supposed to be an eagle's home; why, then, choose something much more like a raven's nest?" ("The Case of Shelley"; F. A. Pottle.)

Shelley, however, soars to Platonic height when in a highly exalted language he expresses his deep devotion to Jane Williams, wife of a friend whom he met at Pisa: "I can give not what mere call love: But wilt thou accept not/The worship the heart lifts above/And the Heavens reject not,—"

But here also he conquers the inevitable satiety of love through his beloved's pity: "And Pity from thee more dear/Than that from another".

The transience of love and its adjunct of melancholy also characterise Keats' experience of love. While Shelley seems satisfied with his beloved's pity in default of her love, Keats is for ever unreconciled to the decay of this emotion. Which is why he seems tormented by the thought that "Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes. Or new Love pine at them beyond tomorrow" ("Ode to a Nightingale") Keats' lyrical mourning seems to partake of the Shelleyan realisation that the God of Love has chosen him to pine away because he is a frail creature, while Fanny Brawne spurns his company. With his heart brimming over with crimson passion he truly turns his heart into the "cradle", "home", and "bier" of their love. The most poignant expression of this tragic sense is found in "*La Belle Dame Sans Merci*" in which he finds himself in the "elfin grot" of Fanny's irresistible spell. He reminisces, "She took me to her elfin grot, And there she wept, and sighed full sore. And there I shut her wild wild eyes. With kisses four."

How passionate is the sensation of kissing the lady of a monumental spell! The poet paints an exquisitely tender vignette of caressing a ravishing woman. It is surely this pervasive sensuousness which sets Keats apart from his other English Romantic confreres. His almost Hellenic exaltation of the human body is brilliantly expressed in the

sonnet, "Bright Star" which is suffused with a tactile spirit. Keats imagines an ultimate haven, "pillowed upon my fair love's ripening breast. To feel for ever its soft fall and swell". No other Romantic poet has been able to combine the noblest expression with the quickening warmth of tactility.

If Shelley practised promiscuity in love, Keats believed in "the holiness of the Heart's affections" and this quality of his is most perfectly brought out in the still picture, "Ode on a Grecian Urn", of the bold lover about to kiss his beloved. This permanence in art is a guarantee of that holiness which Keats prized most in his life.

BYRON'S POEMS

Byron's love poems have a note of adoration for the beauty of the beloved. In an encomiastic moment he says that the physical charm and thrill of the voice of his beloved can compare with the best found on earth: "There be none of Beauty's daughters; With a magic like thee; And like music on the waters; Is thy sweet voice to me."

"She Walks in Beauty" is an eloquent expression of the Platonic conception of love: the beauty of the outward form ensconcing the beauty of the mind. The mournful Mrs. Ann Beatrix Horton, wife of his second cousin, whose wonderous physical charm this small poem immortalises, has: "A mind at peace with all below, A heart whose love is innocent."

Indeed, idealisation is the keynote of Byron's love poems. In "All for Love" his sole pursuit of life is not for "garlands and crowns," but "to see the bright eyes of the dear one discover. She thought that "I was not unworthy to love her." Which is why if such a hard-earned love has any

separation, it will be in silence and tears, but reunion will also come in the same manner. Long years of separation will dry up his store of joy: "If I should meet thee; After long years. How should I greet thee?—With silence and tears."

Wordsworth, the high-priest of Nature, is so enamoured of her beauty that he seems not to care to turn to human affection. Passions in Wordsworth are so subdued and chiselled that he cannot think of his object of love in terms of the flesh. In "She was a Phantom of Delight", which eulogises of Mary Hutchinson, his wife, the poet does not ignore the lovely appearance, star-like eyes and the dusky hair of the girl when he first met her. In fact, all these aspects combined to reflect the radiance of a dancing shape only to haunt, to startle and waylay the poet. But then his enthusiasm gives way to a serene placidity and the girl becomes "A being breathing thoughtful breath. A traveller between life and death": a worthy companion of his life. The traditional Platonic conception of moral goodness in a beautiful physique is apparent here also.

COLERIDGE

To Coleridge "Love is flower-like" ("Youth and Age") and his heart tingles at the thought of "the joys, that came down shower-like. Of Friendship, Love, and Liberty." The mellow softness of Love is, again, nurtured by "All thoughts, all passions, all delights. Whatever stirs this mortal frame" (Love). In order to enjoy this flower-soft and pure emotion he drifts to a romanticised dreamworld and meets his "own dear Genevieve." But this dream girl is brought to the human level with the conventional romantic concepts of "a meek embrace" and "the swelling of her heart."





FOLK SONGS OF MITHILA

by NILIMA DAS



FOlk songs or 'Lok Sangeet' have been in existence since the olden days when classical music was more popular than it is today.

A complete branch of earning, being both a science, and an art, classical music is the product of mind and heart alike. But folk songs are born in the heart only and, therefore, more spontaneous. So both types of music have their peculiar appeal. These flourished side by side. Classical music was appreciated by the more refined people while folk music expressed the moods of the masses.

Folk songs marvellously capture the feelings and emotions of the rustic people. Moods and feelings vary according to circumstances and environments, and so there are folk songs for every occasion and season. Moreover, they more or less depict the culture of a particular area.

Every region has its own folk-music. Though some items may be common there are certain distinguishing and distinct features. While Oudh features Rama prominently and Rajasthan idolises its heroes, 'Braj' has Lord Krishna associated with most of the folk-songs. Mithila, the birth-place of

Janaki, is no less famous for its folk-music than the above-mentioned places. Besides, the association of the two great poets, Vidyapati and Govinda Das with the masses has immensely enriched the folk-songs of Mithila.

There are innumerable types and classes of folk-songs prevalent in Mithila. In general, they can be classified into two main and distinct categories, viz., (I) General, and (II) Nardiya. The main difference between the two categories is that whereas the former can be sung both individually or collectively, the latter is sung only collectively.

Category (I) includes a large number of subdivisions. Among them some of the popular varieties are discussed below.

(i). Vidyapati songs:—Mithila and Vidyapati have rightly become synonyms. One of the greatest national poets in his own right, Vidyapati was born and brought up in Mithila. Though his compositions are respected everywhere in India, it is in Mithila that his songs are almost a part of one's life. Rich in imagination, deep in devotion and unique in popularity, his songs are on the lips of everyone in Mithila. There is a Vidyapati song for every season and occasion. His compositions may well be classified into three categories, such as Bhajans (general devotional songs), Nachari (devotional

songs concerned with Lord Shiva), and other compositions.

After Vidyapati's songs, 'Bhajans' of Shree Lakshminath Gossain are the most popular ones, especially in eastern Mithila. Born early in the 19th century in the village of Parsarma and spending most of his time in the famous village Bangaon (both in the district of Saharsa) he had, as a saint, remained in the Himalayas for several years. His songs are mostly in the same line as those of Surdas and Tulsidas. Along with the Bhajans of Babaji (as Shree Lakshminath is fondly called), the Bhajans of Shree Bansidhar (a disciple of Babaji) are also quite popular and are often passed as the Bhajans of Babaji himself.

(ii) Seasonal songs:—Such songs are sung in different seasons. Following are some of the main varieties: (a) Holi:—people start singing Holi songs right from the Basant Panchami Day (the 20th day of Magh—advent of Basant, or Spring), and the chapter is closed only on the full-moon day of Falgun. During all these long forty days people remain in a gay and festive mood. Every night lots of people congregate at a particular place and sing till late in the night to the accompaniment of 'Mridang' or 'Dholok' and 'Jhal'. The chorus quickly turns into a crescendo and one fears "the singers will bring the roofs down." Sometimes, Holi songs are sung in a lighter vein as well. Apart from the local style, Mithila has adopted the 'Braj' style of Holi songs as well. At several places one can hear 'Braj-Ki-Holi' rendered in an extremely fine style, making free use of 'Kafi' and 'Sarang' ragas. Sant Lakshminath has composed some fine Holi songs in the Braj style and such songs are frequently heard in eastern Mithila.

(b) The closing period of Holi-songs marks the advent of 'Chaiti'. In fact, the last session of Holi-songs ends with a 'Chaiti', which is sung throughout the month of Chaitra.

(c) 'Chaiti' is usually followed by 'Chaumasa' and 'Pawas'. These varieties are sung in the rainy season (usually Jaistha to Bhadra). The name 'Chaumasa' indicates the four months of the rainy season. 'Pawas' is a very sweet variety and has a classical tinge of 'raga', which is known as 'Deshi'.

(d) 'Barahmasa' covers the description of all the twelve months of a year, and can be sung in any month. Both 'Barahmasa' and 'Chaumasa' are particularly meant for singing by women-folk as the songs describe the conditions of a separated beloved during the twelve or the four months, as the case may be.

(e) 'Jata-Jatin' is a variety usually reserved for the members of the fair sex. It is a crude form of ballet. The singers are divided into two parties and the songs are sung in a question-answer form.

FOR PARTICULAR OCCASIONS

(iii) Songs for particular occasions:—Such songs are sung on every occasion. Every social function and ceremony is an occasion for such songs. Most of the songs of this type depict the lives and deeds of Rama and Sita. Some of these songs are devotional songs usually in praise of the different goddesses. Every ceremony is started with one or another of such songs, and each ceremonial and customary function in a marriage is accompanied by an appropriate song coming under the

head 'Marriage-songs'. 'Sohar' is sung immediately before and after the birth of a child, and especially when it is a male child.

'Samdaun', the sweetest of all the above-mentioned varieties, is a parting song. Whether a daughter is being sent to her husband's home or some festival or function is in its closing stages including the immersion of an idol, one can hear a 'Samdaun'. The tuning is full of pathos and if properly rendered on an appropriate occasion, one can find several unconcerned people with wet eyes. This variety is a speciality of Mithila. Among several other popular varieties of this category, 'Jhumara' and 'Batgamni', are usually sung by women-folk while going from one place to another, and 'Jhula' or 'Machki' songs are sung while enjoying a swing-ride.

(iv) Besides all the above, there are some songs which include 'Bhajans' and songs of famous saints and poets. Some present-day Maithili poets have also made their mark and are fast becoming popular with the masses.

NARDIYA SANGET

As is apparent from its name, the origin of the Nardiya Sangeet is supposed to be connected with Naradji. It is commonly supposed to be a variety for the common folk and the so-called low class people. More often than not it is rendered in a standing posture by a group of people to the accompaniment of 'Mridanga' and big 'Jhals'. Mainly sung during the 'Krishnastami' festival, the different varieties of this category may be heard every day throughout the year according to the moods of the people, season and occasion. Usually it is sung to dancing. It depicts some of the special incidents in the life of Lord Krishna. As already stated above, this category was relegated to a very low position and only the illiterate people of the so-called low classes kept it alive. Fortunately, however, of late some highly educated people started taking interest in this.

According to the theme of the songs, 'Nardiya' can be classified into five important sub-divisions, viz., (i) 'Sohar', concerning the period immediately before and after the birth of Lord Krishna; (ii) 'Badhawa', concerning the period after the birth of Lord Krishna, (iii) 'Ras'—depicting his 'Ras-Leela' with 'Gopikas'; (iv) 'Nag-Leela'—depicting the over-powering and killing of the 'Kaliya-Nag' by Krishna, and (v) 'Samdaun'—parting songs mainly depicting the scene of departure of Lord Krishna from Mathura. Besides, 'Pawas' describes the pangs of separation felt by the 'Gopikas' in the absence of Krishna during the rains. There are certain other varieties in this category, but as yet it has not been possible to collect them systematically.

The folk-songs of Mithila are very rich both quantitatively and qualitatively, the description of which in a limited space is well-nigh impossible. The most encouraging fact is that some new blood has been injected into it, some new and good poets do not hate to be associated with the masses and some efforts are being made to collect and publish the old folk-songs.

Folk-songs of Mithila have doubtless an enviable place in the history of the cultural heritage of India.

SOMNATH CHATTOPADHYAY

RELATES

THE SAGA OF

SIR RASHBEHARY GHOSH



R. Sir Rashbehary Ghosh, now a legendary figure in the history of Indian jurisprudence, was the doyen of his Calcutta contemporaries. Indeed, armed with profound erudition in law and a colourful personality, he soon took the lead in his profession.

With reference to Sir Asutosh Mukherjee, any discussion on Sir Rashbehary Ghosh remains incomplete. Yes, these two giants, Sir Rashbehary and Sir Asutosh, were at one time master and pupil. And it is our national pride that Sir R. B. obtained his Law Degree from the Calcutta University. Soon afterwards he became a Doctor. Sir R. B., even in the midst of his busy profession, always remembered with gratitude his *Alma Mater*. That was why he

made generous gifts of Rs. 10 lakhs and Rs. 11,43,000 in 1913 and 1919 respectively for study and research in science in the Calcutta University. Besides, being one of the promoters of the *Swadeshi Movement*, he made a munificent bequest in his will in favour of the National Council of Education.

To come back to the story of Sir Asutosh and Sir Rashbehary, these two historic figures of the Calcutta High Court, though at one time master and pupil, subsequently tried to outshine each other. It is also amazing that their rivalry to excel each other in the knowledge of law knew no bounds. Of course, their intellectual rivalry never took away one's affection for the other as is clear from the following story.

Once Sir Asutosh was lying ill. Hearing this news, Sir R. B. went to see him. Sir Asutosh, as usual, was then going through a new publication with rapt attention as if his illness never stood in the way of his going through books. Sir R. B. entered the room and Sir A. hastily shut the book and put it behind his back. But Sir R. B. became curious and asked Sir A. about the particulars: "Oh, nothing, nothing, just a book", came the reluctant reply from Sir A. But zeal and tenacity were the peculiar characteristics of Sir R. B. He somehow managed to get the book out, turned over its pages and then chuckled: "It is a new edition of..... But I have already gone through it."

Sir R. B.'s great command of English, pure and undefiled, in words or phrases or quotations, was really a marvel; more so, when he was an Indian graduate from the University of Calcutta. Small wonder, therefore, that one of his speeches delivered in the Calcutta Town Hall consisted solely of an exquisite blending of classical quotations from the English poets. He can very well be regarded as a literary tour de force, an object of envy even today.

Strange to say, again, Sir R. B. knew his Shakespeare as thoroughly as the Holy Bible, and he quoted appositely and often from both. At least

one of his cases before a District Magistrate proves so.

It so happened that once he appeared in a case before an English District Judge who was religious in temperament. Sir R. B. was delighted to hear the Magistrate's bend towards religion and observed: "Good. So am I religious in my own way and shall prove that before him by a text or two from the holy Bible." And he did it.

Needless to point out here that the above case before the Mofussil Court had very little relevancy with the Biblical text. Naturally, the members of the Bar present were surprised to hear the above bold comments from Sir R. B. But confidence was the life-blood of Sir R. B. So, he opened his case by reading aloud the Munsiff's judgment of the lower court. Now, fortunately or unfortunately, this Munsiff of the lower court began almost every other sentence in his judgment with "I see quite plainly!" At this particular expression, Sir R. B. in his usual satire commented: "Your Honour, I notice that this young Munsiff is very sure of himself as he begins almost every sentence with 'I see quite plainly!' Your Honour, in my youth, too, I thought that I saw all things quite plainly. But now on getting old, I know that in this life we see 'all things as through a glass darkly'." And his tact and skill attracted the sympathy of this religious-minded judge.

The craze for Law, however, had nothing to do with his devotion towards religion. Indeed, in his heart of hearts he was a great devotee. That is why when Mr. Tarakishore Chaudhury, one of his learned friends of the High Court Bar and later known as the famous Santadas Babaji, finally left the corridors of the High Court to lead a saintly life, Sir R. B. gladly acknowledged his defeat to him. Yes, to him it appeared that Mr. Chaudhury was "going in search of the ultimate truth or Supreme Reality." So, often he advised his juniors that any branch of learning is useful in the life of a true lawyer and that he must cultivate a spirit of detachment and develop the vision of a philosopher.

His mastery over Sanskrit quotations was the natural effect of Sir R. B.'s loyalty and devotion towards religion. To record here one of his famous incidents with Sir Francis Maclean, C.J. Sir R. B. was arguing a case quoting Sanskrit texts. Sir Maclean cited another Sanskrit quotation in reply and asked with pride: "Supposing, Dr. Ghosh, your silent was to come and put this question to you, then what answer would you give him?" Sir R. B.'s indignation found vent in this satire: "My Lord, my first answer would be this. My second answer would be this. And my final answer would be: 'My dear fellow, a little learning is a dangerous thing."

MODE OF PRACTICE

It is also worth recording here the mode of Sir R. B.'s practice. Before accepting any brief or giving any valued opinion on a particular case, it was his usual procedure that at least one prior consultation must be held. So, let us imagine this scene: his Theatre Road residence: a long hall on the upper floor and just after—Court hours. This great sage, reclining upon a sofa at one end of this long hall, is going through the brief, making rapid notes of the authorities on a piece of paper and his juniors or clients sitting in sombre silence in the centre of the hall. The moment he completes these notes, he passes on the slip to his waiting clerk. The clerk hastens downstairs with the same towards his library and returns with a pile of leather-bound

law reports. The silent sage now refers to these reports one after another. And with what rapidity! Indeed, after going through the pages of one report he goes to another, ruthlessly tossing out the former upon the floor of the hall without even caring to close the open pages. Then he slowly dictates his clear-cut opinion or advice in a few incisive words. After that follows the question-hour with which the consultation concludes. With great patience, he courteously answers every question put to him on an opinion or advice. Of course, with an implied limitation. Yes, such questions must be questions proper and not arguments. Finally, the parting scene. The sage rises from his sofa and crosses the floor of the hall in four long strides to shake hands with child-like agility. His great athletic frame was of such perfect proportions that all his movements always appeared agile.

Imagine another scene. Every afternoon: just when the Court rises. Surrounded by his juniors, clients and attendants, the tall-gowned Sir R. B. smoothly moves across the High Court buildings as a Roman Senator with his clients around him. Then slowly he steps down the grand stair-case and proceeds to his waiting equipage at the southern portal of the High Court. The moment he strides down his last steps, his attendant on either side takes his gown off his shoulders. Ah! now a free man! Sir R. B. feels himself once more a free man and hurls himself into his carriage.

He had other great qualities also which could make him a jewel of any Bar.

First, he often used the "aposiopesis" figure of speech with great success. Arguing the elasticity of a certain rule of law or pointing out how great jurists had moulded it for application to almost opposite statement of facts, Sir R. B. often broke off with: "But that is a refinement of law which this Court...." He then jumped on to his next topic even before giving the judge an opportunity of mentally filling the gap with "cannot be expected to appreciate."

Secondly, he had the skill to create an entirely unfavourable impression with such simple remarks: "It is unnecessary, my Lord, to be too particular about this person's character."

Thirdly, his biting sarcasm. Often he used this weapon to meet his requirement. Some stories on his ready wit, sarcasm and temper are noted below.

Once Sir R. B. was appearing in a case on behalf of the defendant. But, unfortunately, under the mistaken impression that he was briefed for the plaintiff, Sir R. B. made out a strong case in favour of the plaintiff. To that, one of his learned juniors got nervous and apprised him of the real fact. Over-witty, Sir R. B. then calmly turning to the bench submitted: "My Lord, this is how the plaintiff would make out his case. However, I will now try to demolish it." And he did demolish the same successfully.

Once a judge refused the prayer of Sir R. B.'s junior to pass over a case with the observation that his learned junior was there and that "one (i.e., the junior) was just as good as the other (i.e., the senior)." Sir R. B. at that point of time was addressing Mr. Jenkins, C. J., and being informed that his junior's prayer for a pass-over was refused, went to the said C. J.'s chamber during the midday recess and obtained leave to appear for a short time only before the former judge. Next, Sir R. B. went to his junior's Court and submitted: "My Lord, the learned C. J. has been kind enough to accommodate me to appear before your Lordship. Now, your Lordship sees that one is just not as good as another."

Sir R. B. always held that the intellect alone

gives a man the right to judge his fellowmen. Indeed, he was impatient of dullness. So, he once politely submitted to one of the Appellate Benches in these terms : "My Lord, I can give your Lordship the law but not the intelligence to apply the law."

Again, to his great knowledge of the law, Sir R. B. added to a great extent verbal power of repartee. For example, on one occasion, a puzzled judge observed : "Mr. Ghosh, have you any authority to support your proposition?" Without caring to keep his voice low, Sir R. B. turned to his clerk and said : "Send for the most elementary book on equity."

Further, when a judge asked him if he had gone through the Law Reports on a particular case, Sir R. B. replied : "I have not only read the case but have digested it and made it my own."

Sir R. B. was also famous for his short temper. Once he brought a number of books into the Court to argue a case. The presiding judge observed : "Mr. Ghosh, I find that you have brought down the whole library here". Came the sharp retort from Sir R. B. : "Yes, my Lord, to teach you law."

Sir R. B. was always confident of his legal lore. Once he was arguing a case before Rampini J., the author of an annotated edition of the Bengal Tenancy Act. While arguing the case, Sir R. B. expounded a proposition of law to which Rampini J. intercepted : "Is that so? I have never heard of it!"

Sir R. B. : "No, it is not the Bengal Tenancy Act."

Rampini J. : "What has the B.T. Act got to do with it?"

Sir R. B. : "As I say, the B.T. Act has got nothing to do with it."

And Sir R. B. sat down.

True, Sir R. B. was notorious for his temper. Yet, he had the broadness of mind to readily offer apologies if circumstances so required. An incident of 1900 illustrates this. Sir R. B. was arguing for the third day before a Division Bench headed by Sir Francis Maclean, C. J. Being questioned on a particular point by Sir Maclean, he did not give any reply and threw down the book on the table. Yes, somehow Sir R. B. was under the impression that the Hon'ble C. J. had not fully appreciated his argument. Sir Gooroodas J., the other learned judge of the bench, saved this ugly situation. With much trouble, he succeeded in persuading Sir R. B. to offer an apology to the learned C.J. for his conduct. Sir R. B. acceded to the request and did so. Thus, a reconciliation was brought about between him and the bench.

Sir R. B. always remained busy in his profession. Yet, any national cause or interest seldom escaped his attention. Indeed, he was a national hero. His towering personality and spouting eloquence added much strength to the *Swadeshi Movement*. He was not even afraid of making a scathing condemnation of the Seditious Meetings Act or the indiscreet utterances of Lord Curzon, which caused a furore even in England, in these terms : "Dressed in his Chancellor's robes and with a little brief authority...." (Be it stated here for the readers' interest that Lord Curzon often visited Sir R. B.'s place for advice and guidance when both of them passed their days in Simla).

Finally, a few words about the romantic Sir R. B. It has been truly said that law is a jealous task-mistress and that the science of law is a very

serious study which robs its votaries of much of the graces of human intellect. Nevertheless, one discovered, with great surprise in the apparently prosaic character of Sir R. B. the traces of romantic fervour. Perhaps that was possible as he was the disciple of Dr. Alexander-Duff, the great teacher of humanities. The Simla incident is an eye-opener in this respect.

Sir R. B. was then enjoying six months' holiday at his house "GRASMERE" on Summer Hill, Simla and occupied its famous large room adjacent the porch where Sir Herbert Risley had written his "Golden Book of India." The room had windows on three sides affording the loveliest views of hills, valleys and forests. There was a spiralling stair-case from the porch downstairs to Sir R. B.'s room on the upper floor. The stair-case again was midway by a window with glass curtains. Generally, this window was always kept shut as the hilly wind used to blow through it.

And to enter Sir R. B.'s room, one had to use the above stair-case. It so happened that one day one of Sir R. B.'s friends came under the window on his way upstairs. To his surprise, however, this closed window was suddenly opened to welcome the guest with a soft cascade of rose petals flowing through the window and diffusing sweet fragrance all around. And, believe it or not, at the head of the stair-case stood Sir R. B. smiling with one of his hands on the cord of the curtain which he had just then pulled open.

"This", exclaimed Sir R. B. smiling "is how I welcome my guests."

Indeed, to Sir R. B.'s friend, this manner of greeting appeared as right royal and reminded him of those golden days of the Roman Emperors who at official banquets suddenly deluged their guests with a shower of roses from the roof above the awning. Perhaps Sir R. B. also reproduced the same Roman scene after enjoying the Academy painting "The Roses of Heliogabalus" to give his guest this novel greeting—so gracious, so majestic and so elegant in simplicity!

The 28th February, 1921, was one of the blackest days for India. On that day Sir R. B. passed away from this world of mortals, full of years and honour.

To us, Sir R. B. is no more. But he still lives among us because, as Indians, we firmly believe in the philosophy that the soul is never born nor dead. Indeed, it is unborn, eternal, everlasting and primeval: for though the body is slain, the soul is not. Rather, the soul of Sir R. B., casting off his worn-out body, like a man discarding worn-out clothes and taking new ones; has entered into others which are new.

Yes, the philosophy of Sir R. B. can never be dead. Because, the mortal Sir R. B. was as well a true Roman Senator who firmly believed in the enlightened maxim of "SALUS POPULI SUPREMA LEX" (the people's welfare is the supreme law). And like a Roman Senator, had his one arm always stretched out in legal command, while the other one in benediction to bestow the blessing of the rule of law on his people.

So long as nationalism would prevail or justice be done in India, Sir R. B. will be a source of great inspiration to us. The saga of Sir R. B. is not a personal one. It is essentially a national one. Rather, it is universal in character. For it reflects the synthesis of all virtues in one: a synthesis peculiar to the land which has produced many a noble soul.



THE ETERNAL

Drama

By LAKSHMI NARAYAN MOHANTY



UMMY... Oh! Mummy dear." The angry and excited calls of the father-in-law were again and again heard from afar.

The eldest son came scurrying up to the roadside. His father was there, seated astride a rickshaw. He was very much taken aback by his overwrought features. "Why did he come back? He had gone to the railway station. Did he miss the train? Never did he miss a train in his life. What then?"—a host of thoughts came rushing into his mind.

"Daddy, did you miss the train?" he faltered aloud.

"Where has your wife gone? He was simply swelling with suppressed rage.

"Well, she's in the kitchen, Dad. Where else could she be at this time?"

"Oh, you people've only your stomachs to fill as though life's but an endless feast." The old man somehow got off the rickshaw. His khadi dress bore a rent, the sign of a careless and unmindful tear.

The famous litterateur, dark-complexioned and rather a giant in bulk, marched back into his house in a huff. His condition clearly betrayed his agony. He made a bee line for the kitchen door, and called aloud, "Mummy; Mummy dear."

"O! It's you, Father?" The father-in-law's angry voice simply shocked her. Trembling with fear, she let go of the iron pan, which rattled with quite a din to the floor. The daughter-in-law just looked on, dumb and trembling.

"It is impossible for me to stay in this house any longer."

"Why? What happened to you this morning, Daddy? Weren't you going to Rourkela? Then why did you come back?"

"Oh, a hell of a bother! Every thing is pell-mell! Not a moment of peace! One's own house or the marketplace—all's the same."

"Why Dad! Won't you attend the literary conference? What happened to it? Has it been postponed?"

"Why would the Literary Conference be postponed? I have cancelled my tour — rather been forced to. I have completely lost my good name. It is lost for good. None could ever accuse me of not having kept my word. But today, only because of you, I have had to give it up."

"Because of me! Daddy, what have I done? What fault have I committed?"

"No, may be it is not your doing. It is ordained by my own destiny! If I would have kept that box always in my possession, this wouldn't have happened at all! I wouldn't be facing this irreparable loss!"

"Your box, Daddy! I have myself put it there along with all your luggage for the tour."

"Where is it then? When I got on the train and checked my luggage, there was no box to be found."

"Good heavens! Have I committed such a blunder?" The daughter-in law at once ran pell-mell to the bed room, the iron ladle tightly clasped in her hand. In a moment she was back. Now her voice was quite confident.

"Yes, Daddy! I have myself seen your box

being laid on the rickshaw along with the other luggage."

"Yes, Daddy, I myself put the box on the rickshaw," said the eldest son in a weak and tremulous voice. His father's misfortune and rage had simply robbed him of all his self-confidence.

"Well, well, then what happened to that box? Where is it? Who has taken it away?"

"Has it been stolen from the railway platform then?" "Oh! ho! I have lost my dearest possession!"

That giant of an old man broke down completely. He began crying as loudly as a maniac. This was such a terrible shock to him that from then onwards he couldn't get up from his bed. His younger son who used to live at Puri came and took him to his own place, so that the old man would get the fullest attention, nursing and care.

"Oh! Sisy dear! What harm, if you stay on for a few days more?"

"No, No, please don't detain me for one more moment. I must have to go today. I don't know what losses I will have to face when I am back home."

"Oh! That's what the die-hard housewives always say! Please stay a few days. As soon as my leave is sanctioned, I myself will escort you home. If you so desire I will drop a few lines to my elder brother this very day."

"No, please don't force me. If you just put me on the train I will surely be able to reach home safe and hearty by myself. Don't you remember your elder brother instructed me to go back as soon as all the rituals of the funeral are finished?"

"Would you be putting together the fallen pieces of the disintegrated household?"

"Please don't try to show off your knowledge of the scriptures. Have we any other close relation at home to look after it? Father-in-law is now in the realm of the departed. Mother-in-law was already there. So I have never seen her myself. Your brother is as disinterested as Lord Krishna himself. You stay away from home as you have to earn a living. So it is I who have to look after your big household single-handed. Why can't you see that I haven't enough respite even to die?"

"So, as you desire, your ladyship."

The very next moment, the brother-in-law handed over to the elder sister-in-law a small wooden cash box, saying "Father has bequeathed this to you."

"Well, well, where from has this blessed box reappeared?"

"I don't know. Nor have I ever tried or desired to know it."

"Don't you remember that for this particular box our household one day was turned upside down as if in an earthquake."

"Well, forgive and forget. The past is dead. Let it bury its corpses."

"Well, where is the key?"

"Father didn't give me any key. Just before breathing his last father told me—'Now my last moment is come. All near and dear ones have come and taken leave of me except the elder daughter-in-law. Oh! She is always overburdened with the unending botherations of a big household. How can she come freeing herself from those bonds?'

Oh! She is a very pitiable lady. I pray to the Almighty that she may live in peace and plenty. If after all she does not come to see me, give her this box."

So the cash box had to be broken open. A few beautiful dolls, a picture of a young beauty, a small letter and a bank cheque fully written out were all the contents of that mysterious box.

The letter had only a few lines. "My dearest Mummy! Whatever I have earned in my lifetime I have spent it all for you people. My life is a sage of struggles. But after all, the great men say life is but an endless struggle. I lost my father in the dawn and my wife in the midday of my life. I lived, obsessed only by the shadows of a dream. You haven't seen my only daughter. She was my most beloved child. She was the living image of your mother-in-law. One day she too suddenly left this mortal world leaving me alone to brave all this. Ever since then I have been brooding and brooding over these memories. My bank account amounts to four thousand rupees, which you two sisters (daughter-in-laws) please share.

The postscript read: "Perhaps you remember that the sudden disappearance of a small cash box one day created a terrible turmoil in our life—especially mine. That day I scolded you (elder daughter-in-law) very harshly, though poor soul you were innocent. Lord Jagannath, the Lord of the universe, extended his divine grace to this poor mite, and my childhood friend, a Police Inspector of Lalbag Police Station, with infinite care was able to recover it. It suddenly reappeared just like its astounding disappearance. That cash box con-

tained the clue to my life's existence. That is why I would live for a few more days."

Holding the bank cheque the elder daughter-in-law asked, "What happened to the sum of money that father had saved? Did he squander the whole amount while he was here?" After this sneering remark, she did not wait there for a reply. She left the place in a huff.

The younger son, however, took up the portrait of the young beauty and bowed low to pay his homage to the soul of the departed mother.

With great dare he gathered together the dolls, etc., scattered all around. He handed them over to his wife and said in a voice choked with emotion. "Take great care of this portrait. She is our presiding deity. Today I have recovered my long-lost treasure. It is a lucky day for me. I have made up my mind that I will start an institute for the destitute and needy in her name. Let her lost memory be revived through our effort. A life full of strife and struggle is always to be desired. The world is an infinite store house of work and work only. Those who hanker after happiness without work can never achieve anything. They are the few people who are always cheated by life."

"Yes, I fully agree with you. One more word please. Would you please tell my sister-in-law that she can have the whole amount of the cheque? We do not need a penny out of it. Now I will have to run to the kitchen to prepare some sweets. She will need some tiffin for the railway journey."

The pale sun of the morning slowly took on a darker hue like that of the ripe plum.

(Translated from the original Oriya short story, "Nitya Bartaman" by Asok Rao, M.A.)



HINDU FESTIVALS

IN MUGHAL COURT

K. M. YUSUF



THE Battle of Panipat in 1526 A.D. witnessed the dawn of Mughal Empire. Babur ruled India for only four years and had no sufficient time to formulate a policy of his own. He more or less followed the policy of the Lodi Sultans and had a dislike for Indians.

Humayun re-established himself in India after fifteen years of wandering. He was less orthodox than his father and came in close touch with his non-Muslim subjects. He was the first Mughal emperor to adopt the Tula-dan system of the Hindus.

The golden chapter of fellow-feeling and brotherhood among various communities commenced with the accession of the great Akbar as the Shah-i-Sultanat-i-Mughalia. He wanted to build up a united and strong Hindustan on secular foundations and did not hesitate to take a number of bold steps to the displeasure of the orthodox Muslims. His policy was to respect the religious sentiments of the overwhelming majority of his non-Muslim subjects.

Akbar is the only Muslim monarch of India who bravely resisted the Muslim orthodoxy and incurred the displeasure of a strong band of *Mullas* led by Abdul Qadir Badayuni.

Akbar's *Ibadat-Khana* was the centre of religious tolerance. He took Hindu wives not by force or to impress his regal splendour but to perpetuate Hindu-Muslim unity and brotherliness. The induction of Rajput princesses in the Imperial *Harem* saw the birth of Hindu temples in the palaces. Islam and Hinduism co-existed under him in peace and amity.

He is the solitary Muslim monarch of medieval India who took concrete steps for the national and emotional integration of the country in his own way, and his footsteps were followed by his two illustrious successors. With the view of cementing Hindu-

Muslim ties, he introduced in his *Durbar* and the royal palace the observance of a number of Hindu festivals, rites and ceremonies.

We have on record that the Hindu festivals of Raksha-Bandhan (*Rakhi-Bandhan*), Dasehra, Holi, Diwali, Shivaratri and Basanta-Panchami were regularly observed in the Mughal *Durbars*.

Akbar made *Rakhi* a national festival and it was celebrated as a social function. The *Ani-i-Akbari* tells us that the nobles and courtiers used to tie *Rakhi* studded with precious jewels on the Emperor's wrist. When the nobles out of zeal and affection started offering Akbar with threads enwrapped with rubies, pearls and diamonds, he had to stop the lavishness of the *Amirs* and ordered to tie threads made of silk only. Jahangir observed this festival with equal vigour and discussed it in his *Memoirs*. He described *Rakhi* as *Nigah-dasht*. Aurangzeb stopped it but it was re-introduced by his successors. Akbar II and Bahadur Shah II patronised this festival lavishly and they used to lead processions, to mark the festival, from Red Fort to the shrine of the famous Sufi-saint, Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki.

On the day of *Dasehra* the Mughal emperors used to review horses and elephants. Jahangir mentions in his *Tuzuk* that "early in the morning, all the elephants and horses, even those in stables, were washed, groomed and caparisoned to be arrayed for inspection by the Emperor". After the inspection, the Emperor used to bestow royal favours on *Umara*. The *Alamgirnama* tells us that *Dasehra* was observed in the court of Aurangzeb as well. Akbar II and Bahadur Shah II maintained the tradition of observing *Dasehra* as a court-festival and the latter in spite of his ruined financial condition used to bestow precious stones on the chief superintendent of the royal stable after inspecting the horses caparisoned with coloured dresses and ornaments.

AMRITA BAZAR PATRIKA

The Dasehra festival as organised under the Mughals had a great impact upon the Muharram celebrations. The Sultans of Delhi confined the observance of Muharram to Majlis, Fatiha and Niyaz (vide *Ejaz-i-Khusravi*, iv, p. 324). The Taziya procession of the Muharram originated in India with Tamerlane and under the Mughal emperors adopted the shape of huge rallies on the line of the gorgeous Dasehra processions (vide *Hindustan Ke Musalman Hukmarano Ke Ahed Ke Tamadduni Jalwae*, P. 475).

Holi, the festival of colour, was always a pleasant event in the Mughal palace. Monserrate, Petermundy, Thevenot, Storia, Della Valle and many other European travellers have described at length the observance of Holi by the Mughal emperors, princes and princesses. Akbar and Jahangir used to participate in Holi revelry with full enthusiasm and exchanged sprinkling of coloured water with the Hindu and Muslim inmates of the *Harem*. Aurangzeb stopped Holi in the imperial palace but it was resumed soon after him and continued till the days of Bahadur Shah II. Faiyaz in *Bazm-i-Akhir* gives a graphic account of the Holi celebrations in Bahadur Shah Zefar's court when it almost assumed the status of a national festival and members of all communities participated.

The festival of lights or Diwali was a regular feature in the Mughal Durbar. Akbar had nothing to do with the worship of the goddess Lakshmi but participated in the festive side of the celebration. Abdul Fazl says that the Emperor participated in the *Gowardhan Puja* function, which followed Diwali, and inspected beautifully adorned cows. Jahangir was not only fond of Diwali. Shah Alam II, Akbar II and Bahadur Shah Zafar observed Diwali as a court festival. The *Nadirat-i-Shahi*, written by Shah Alam II, gives an account of the celebration of this festival in his court. The royal palace used to be illuminated, goddess Saraswati worshipped and princesses in rich costumes participated in music and dance (vide *Burhan*, Vol. 61, p. 270). The dazzling illumination of the Red Fort on the night of Diwali and the fair inside the Qila-i-Mualla presented a unique spectacle of Hindu-Muslim amity.

Shivaratri or the festival of Lord Shiva, was observed with due solemnity in the Mughal court. The festival was celebrated with fireworks. Akbar, according to the *Ain-i-Akbari*, spent the *Shivaratri* nights with Yogis who used to pray for his long life. Jahangir mentions this festival in his *Memoirs*. He spent the night of *Shivaratri* in 1616 A.D. at Kamalpur and met the Yogis of Bengal. The significant impact of this festival is found on the Muslim festival of *Shab-i-Baraat*.

Basant Panchami, which heralds the advent of spring, was celebrated by the Muslims even before Mughal rule. The Basant Melas were regular features in Delhi from the days of Khwaja Nizamuddin Auliya *Mahbub-i-Ilahi* and Amir Khusrau.

The Muslim Sufis used to hold Basant fairs for fifteen days each year at various shrines of the *Sufi* saints. The Mughal emperors also introduced this festival in their courts. Abul Fazl has discussed *Basant Panchami* in his *Ain* but no exhaustive account of its observance in Mughal courts is available. Prince Azimushshan, Shah Alam II and Bahadur Shah II used to celebrate this festival in their courts with prompt and pageantry. The *Muraqqa-i-Delhi* written by Salar Jung in 1739 A.D. gives a detailed account of the Basant festival as observed by the Muslims of Delhi in general (vide M. Mujeeb's *Indian Muslims*, p. 385).

The *Ain-in-Akbari* speaks of *Ramnarami* and *Janmastami* festivals. These festivals, though not

observed under royal patronage, were popular festive occasions for Hindus and Muslims alike.

Apart from the above festivals, the Hindu practice of *Tula-dam* and *Jharoka Darshan* were introduced and followed punctiliously by the Mughals. The *Tula-dam* is the Hindu custom of giving alms to the indigent. Akbar adopted this method of charity from his father and regularly weighed himself against different commodities which were then distributed among the poor. Jahangir and Shah Jahan did it lavishly. The orthodox Aurangzeb unexpectedly turned out a great admirer of *Tula-dam* and advised his grandson to weigh "twice a year in order to ward off evil." Some Mughal princes celebrated their birthdays by *Tula-dam* (vide *Inshahi-Madhoram*).

JHAROKA DARSHAN

The ancient Hindu custom of *Jharoka Darshan* "which was to enable the common people to have direct access to the King and to present their individual grievances or complaints before him without any hindrance or interference from the officers and mace-bearers" was revived by Akbar. He used to appear before the public after sun-rise and generally spent four and a half hours every day for *Darshan*. Many Brahmins, who looked upon the monarch as an incarnation of Rama and Krishna or a prototype of their ancient Rajas, would not have their breakfast without first catching a glimpse of Akbar (vide Badayuni's *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*, ii, p. 325-326).

The *Jharoka Darshan* was a type of informal Durbar. Akbar with the help of two *Waqia-Nawisan* and a few officials used to hear people, high and low, men and women. They were allowed to present petitions and the Emperor did them justice on the spot. The *Darshan* served as a great political instrument for closer contacts between the monarch and his subjects (vide Srivastava's *Akbar, The Great Mughal*, ii, pp. 30-31; 274-275).

Jahangir retained the *Jharoka Darshan* while Shah Jahan made it more elaborate and convenient by constructing sheds for the public below the salutation balloonay. Even the puritan Aurangzeb followed this practice for a few years.

Akbar adopted yet another Hindu practice of putting *Tika* mark on the forehead of Hindu kings and nobles. Jahangir and Shah Jahan retained it but Aurangzeb discontinued the same.

Prince Dara Shikoh, the Mughal *Pandit* and the erudit-scholar of the Timurid line, was a great admirer of Hindu festivals and learning. He attempted to discover a modus vivendi between irreconcilable doctrines which divided mankind into hostile communities. Dara always wore a diamond ring inscribed with the word *Prabhu*.

The far-sighted policy of most of the Mughal emperors and princes went a long way in creating a congenial atmosphere for Hindu-Muslim cordiality. Like Akbar, Bahadur Shah II also prohibited cow-slaughter and appointed a Hindu, Raja Bhola Nath, for the performance of Muslim religious ceremonies like the *Dastarkhwan-i-Hazrat Ali* and *Niyaz* of Ghaus-ul-Azam Abdul Qadir Jeelany of Baghdad.

Thus, we see, the Mughals played a vital role in bringing about a religious and cultural fusion between Hindus and Muslims and they succeeded to a great extent. Under them "the art of living peacefully with neighbours of a different religion had reached a very high level," remarks C. F. Andrews.

WHENCE CAME THE GYPSIES?



By BISWANATH MUKERJI



HE Egyptians have a saying that you can never find a nomad when you want one, but that they arrive in droves when you least expect them.

This is also applicable to the European nomads — the gypsies. Although townspeople will rarely see one, there are a

considerable number of gypsies scattered over Europe. There are variations in their appearance, trades, forms of transport and standards of living, but they all share certain basic characteristics. If you come across a gypsy anywhere from Spain to Turkey, from Norway to Italy, you will see that he is a nomad, wandering freely and living on his wits and cunning.

The gypsy recognises no political or geographical boundaries. If society tries to put up barriers, he will find a way of overcoming them—by logic or cunning. The true gypsy will never be confined.

Generally, the gypsies of Europe live on the plains and travel overland. Water restricts their

free movement: it is expensive and awkward to transport their loads and animals by boat. But they will often camp by the side of a river.

Countless poems and stories extoll the limitless freedom and ceaseless wandering of the gypsies. But in cold climates, the nomadic life is hard and unromantic. Often, entire tribes have died under heavy snow falls. Others have drowned in frozen rivers while trying to cross with their loaded caravans.

But the attempts by various Governments in Europe to give the gypsies housing and a settled way of life have always failed. They are only at home in the open, living at one with Nature. They become restless under a roof. When gypsies have spent terms in prison, they invariably emerge physically and mentally depressed.

Many learned treatises have been written about gypsies over the centuries. Books have been published, organisations have been formed and experts have inquired but, up till now, very little is known for certain about their origins. Among the gypsies themselves, there is no past—only a present and an

uncertain future. No bard has written an epic about gypsy life. No gypsy Priest has set down a scripture about their religion, their marriage ceremonies or their social customs.

The only source is the language, physical appearance and folk lore. According to a Spanish tale, the gypsies' ancient home was Egypt. After banishment many centuries ago, they have roamed the world.

The Russian version tells how an Egyptian Pharaoh and his entire army drowned in the Black Sea while chasing the Jews. Only a young man and a young woman survived and the gypsies are their descendants.

The gypsies' black hair and eyes and their food habits lends some support to the theory that they came originally from Egypt. Then again, some people have pointed to the similarities between the gypsies and the Jews, in particular their proneness to be spread all over the world. But neither theory has been proved.

In 1763, a Hungarian student of philosophy, Stefan Velay, suddenly noticed, while talking to three students from Malabar, the similarities between the Indian languages and the gypsies of his own country. Velay collected one thousand words from the three young Indians and placed them before the gypsies. Most of the thousand words were recognised. Here are just a few examples : zanesh = know, tu = you, kale = black, dur = far, angar = cold, baro = big, tel = oil dic = see, name = name, opar = top. In addition, the gypsies call themselves 'Rom' and in the plural, 'Roma' a corruption of dom = the untouchable caste of India. Some people allege that the gypsies are the descendants of the Jut.

But if we accept the theory, the problem still remains :—when did the ancestors of the gypsies leave India, and why? Was it before the modern Indian languages were formed? The Persian poet, Firdousi wrote that King Brahm (who ruled from 430 to 443 AD) brought 10,000 luri (professional singers) from India and set them up with food, corn seed, bullocks and donkeys. But they soon ate the corn seed and the bullocks and left Persia as nomads.

Some people have tried to prove that the gypsies have an international organisation. But this is not so. It could be that occasionally some of the semi-domesticated gypsies or gypsy fellow travellers have tried to form such organisations, but these attempts have failed. In 1930, it was believed that several tribes of gypsies assembled in Warsaw and elected one, Michael II as their King. He was reputed to have written to George V addressing His Majesty as "Dear Colleague . . ." and asking that the British monarch allot some land in North Africa where the gypsies could settle down permanently. But nothing more was heard of Michael II and his kingdom.

But although the gypsies have no established organisation, they do have strong links one with another. And it has been proved beyond doubt that they have a strict code of conduct and social discipline. A gypsy who violates the laws is subjected to severe punishment. A nose or an ear may be chopped off, in extreme cases, he may be executed. Police intervention may sometimes save the accused man from his punishment, but he will never be accepted back into the tribe.

Gypsies are a male-dominated society. But the womenfolk have a strong influence and particularly the one old woman who is the power in every group.

During the marriage ceremony, the gypsy bride and groom will cut their wrists and allow the blood to mingle. Although the bride then becomes the man's constant companion and workmate, her main duty is the bearing and rearing of children. Gypsies

have a great affection for their children for it is only through them that they can see the continuity of the tribe. The birth rate is high and, as a result, the women's health breaks down early. The traditional concept of gypsy beauty is something of a myth. Nomadic life increases infant mortality. But birth and death are natural, almost casual events in gypsy society. However, most of their superstitions are attached to these two events. After childbirth, a mother remains segregated and untouchable for a few days and her dress and bed linen are burnt.

It is the same after a death. When a gypsy dies, his belongings are packed into his caravan or tent and the whole lot is burnt.

Sometimes, whole tribes of gypsies have been converted to Christianity, particularly to Roman Catholicism. But, as so often, the conversion is essentially superficial and meaningless. Although not idolaters, they remain devoted to their tribal god, Dial (Deo or Dev) and life is still governed by ghosts and spirits. Gypsies eat almost anything. The only taboo is the meat of their constant companions, the horse and the dog. A member who breaks this taboo is instantly expelled.

But they have no qualms about eating an old carcass, finding it more of a delicacy than freshly-killed meat.

They practise various trades. They work on farms, weave baskets, make artificial flowers, practise palmistry and sell herbal tonics. Their relations with their employers are often disrupted since the gypsies make a habit of guile and cunning. It has been known for gypsies to promise a simple farmer that his savings will be doubled if he hands them over to the gypsies for the night. And of course the savings then vanish forever. They will steal occasionally, although never at night when the spirits of darkness are abroad. When a gypsy has been burgling he will leave a mark at the house to warn his colleagues away.

In the life of the underdeveloped Eastern European countries, the gypsies were an important part of economic life. They made horseshoes and small agricultural implements. They were tinkers. And above all, they were horse traders, skilled in recognising quality and breed.

Horse stealing is another favourite occupation. Sometimes they file the teeth of an old horse and dye its coat to pass it off as a younger horse.

Gypsies also practise magic and organised bear dancing until it was banned in most of Europe.

Their main transport is the caravan, with mules and horses to draw their carts. In west Europe, their caravans are generally very clean and highly decorated. They may cost from £30 to £150, paid in instalments to the carpenters who will be a gypsy family who may have built all the caravans for the tribe for generations.

Today's caravans are modernised in size and shape and in Britain the gypsies use cars and vans to pull their mobile homes. In many cases too, they have turned from horse trading to metal scrap dealing.

There is no sophisticated gypsy culture but they do have their own songs and dances. The snake dance of the gypsy girls is famous and has been likened to Indian dancing forms. The violin is the favourite gypsy instrument. And modern gypsies very much enjoy the cinema.

In spite of their resistance, the gypsies are being encroached upon by modern society. Their way of life is changing. But there is no sign that they will ever completely settle down like the rest of us.

The Tantras: their significance

By MONORANJAN BASU



THE Fundamental tenets of the Tantras form an essential part of the dynamic aspect of Indian culture. Both in philosophic speculation and religious practices, they further exhibit that Spiritual renunciation (nihsveyas) and material progress or unfoldment (abhyudaya) go side by side in the history of Indian thought and art of living. In this system an attempt is made to bridge the gulf between matter and spirit.

The attitude of the Tantras is synthetic—in this system God (Pati), world (Pasa) and Individual (Pasu) are taken to be real—rather explaining it away it tries to explain the alleged mysteries of the world. The Tantras do not find any absolute distinction between action (Karma), devotion (Bhakti) and Knowledge (Jnana)—all three must be harmonised to attain the Supreme object the aspirant has in view. Complete realization is the final goal the Tantras aspire after—the paths are not always the same for all aspirants as they differ according to their respective bearing and predispositions. All the different paths, all the varying principles, must ultimately lead to a final synthesis where "Thou" is equated to "That" 'Pasu' into 'Pasupati' 'Jiva' into 'Siva'. Such an equation is ultimately identical. The question of complete realization mainly relates to the Individual, but in the Tantras the Individual is not taken to be an isolated unit completely segregated from the rest of the society and physical environments. Rather, individuals are necessary units forming the particles of a grand cosmic scheme. The Tantras do not believe in the methods of negativism, escapism and ignorance.

Evils are there in the world, but they are necessary evils eventually for some higher good. In experiential level one cannot start from a state of transcendental nothing or absolute vacuum. The world that we find before us as something with good and evil in it, is to be accepted and appreciated. But with the growth of experience and realization, the attitude gradually changes and is raised into a vision and understanding where one can enjoy ecstatic pleasure, and finally the alleged distinction between good and evil disappears. He finds Siva in everything. Sakti, appearing as evil gets sublimated and the limitations become allies for higher perfection. There is a common saying in the Tantras, "The poison which kills, becomes an elixir of life when suitably tested by a wise physician." The Tantras do not believe in the absolute bifurcation between matter and spirit—in the empirical level such dichotomy seems to be a fact, but the Tantras profess that there are frontiers beyond our sense perception as there is reality beyond our conceptual limit. On the other hand, the Tantras believe in the Principle of Polarity, it has shown

by way of evolution how from that a logical integrated synthetic whole such a perceptible world of forms and names has come into being.

The Tantras are practical and essentially realistic in their approach to problems: In this system the world is not illusory but it really exists in the supreme experience. In the Tantras, there is no distinction between Siva and Sakti—conceptually Sakti is distinguishable from Siva in theoretical and conventional analysis, but in realization she is identical with Siva. The Tantras differ from mayavada, as usually interpreted in this respect. Like other systems of Indian Philosophy, the Tantras also ultimately aim at spiritual realization—the highest aim has been called by a special name in the Tantra Shastras such as 'Purutakhyati' though it is generally known as 'moksha' or liberation from bondage in other Indian systems. That 'Jiva' is potentially 'Siva' is to be realised by liquidating the bonds and limitations that make him as little knower and little enjoyer. The Tantras also believe in theories of 'Karma' and 'Rebirth' 'Transmigration of Soul' and the like. They owe their origin to revealed knowledge or scriptures it starts from experience, be it, psychical or spiritual and verifies it in terms of embodied consciousness.

There are some a priori difficulties to make revealed knowledge communicative and intelligible in a conventional way. Moreover, the system of Tantras is not only a speculative philosophy set in a rigid form of logical terms but they are essentially Sadhana Shastras. The esoteric aspect of Tantrika Sadhana is primarily a matter of spiritual realization, which presupposes practices of Yoga. According to the Tantras, the individual body is divided into six centres (Mutadhara-Ajna), technically known as 'Sat-Chakras' and Kundalini Shakti, an embodied consciousness which works through them. The awakening of Kundalini forms the central point of Tantrika Sadhana. Notwithstanding such mystical aspects, the Tantras have tried in their own ways to solve the alleged mysteries of the world, the body-mind relationship hurdle, the problem of individual self, both in its epistemic and ontological sides, the Absolute or Siva both in its static and dynamic aspects. Finally, the principles of Existence, consciousness and Bliss form the beginning and end of the speculative side of Tantrika culture. In this short compass an attempt shall be made to present in a general way what do the Tantras really mean.

The word 'Tantra' is derived from the root 'tan' meaning to spread or 'Vistar'—there are scholars who derive it from 'tatri' or 'tantri' in the sense of 'Vyutpadana' or origination. In ganapath, however, 'Tantri' bears the same meaning as 'tan' and it is probable that the former root is the modification of the latter. Hence the derivative meaning of the term 'Tantra' is to spread or expand what is

latent in the individual self through Jnana or Consciousness (Tanyate, Vistarayate, Jnanam anenaiti Tantram). Here Consciousness or knowledge is not simply a passive reproduction of mind, but is of the nature of Intuitive knowledge and spontaneous action. In the Kamika Agama of the southern school of Saivism it is said "Tanoti Vipulam Artham tattva-mantra-Samanvitam, Tranancha Kurute Yasmat Tantram Ityabhidiyate". Here 'Tattvas (Principles), 'Mantra' (sound) have a special sense—'Tattva' means Cosmic principles and 'mantra' signifies cosmic sound. Tantra, therefore, combines the application of these two codes (Tattva and mantra) with a view to attaining spiritual ascendency. Tattva further denotes different grades of the universe or universes.

The universe of experience consists of a number of Bhuvanus and planes of life and Consciousness made up of Tattvas. In the Saiva-Sakta Agamas, thirty-six tattvas are recognised. These Tattvas originate from the Alogical, integrated, synthetic whole, the ultimate locus where Siva-Sakti stays in unison or non-separateness. These tattvas are again divided into three groups—counting from down upwards there are twenty-four Tattvas similar to those recognised in Samkhya with 'Prakrti' standing at the peak (Satva, Rajas and Tamás in a state of equilibrium), yielding the inner instruments of Buddhi, Ahamkara and Manas. Beyond Prakrti, there is 'Purusa'; the individual self subject to five restricting factors, such as, 'Kata' 'Vidya', 'Kala' Niyati, Raga—here maya stands at the top of them and making the world appear illusory and other than Siva though in reality it is not so. Above and beyond maya is 'Suddha-Vidya' the realm of pure knowledge, in which the true relation of things, such as 'I' and 'this', is realised. At the base of it is 'Isvara' who ordains all as 'this'. Here we reach the root of any act or process of objectification. In this stage the experience assumes the form 'This am I', in which 'This' becomes more prominent, while the other factor 'I' goes to the background. The same 'Ishvara Tattva' as Sadashiva Tattva is the root and pre-condition of any process of Subjectification—such as a state of experience may be formulated as 'I am'. Here 'Iccha' aspect of Divine Sakti is the dominant feature. Next comes 'Sakti-Tattva' which is the root of 'Idam' and 'Aham' and contains in Herself all that may evolve or come out. Sakti Tattva abides as the potentiality of the infinite variety of forms in which life becomes more manifest in the Universe. She is Siva's own nature to be or become. Here 'ananda' aspects is predominant—'ananda' is the cause of all things to be or become. Siva-Sakti remains identified—Shiva Tattva may be said to be life in the finest universal seed which is Shakti-Tattva.

'Mantra' is the science of the Cosmic sound. It is the consciousness aspect of Reality. It is of the nature of intuitive knowledge and spontaneous action (Caitanyam drk-kriya rupam). In the Brahma Sutras of Vedanta, there is a sutra 'Ikshate na sabdam'—Brahman sees, therefore, it can not be free from words, logos or thought. The cosmic sound is based on the Brahman as alphabets forming the Vija Bindu and Nada of the garland of letters or (varna-mala). The Tattvas or principles originate from 'Sabda-Brahman' and form the object side,

while the mantras form the subject side of 'supreme experience'—These two sides together constitute the different grades of the Universe or Universes—practising and realising which one can attain spiritual ascendency. Once entering into this domain, a demand is felt from within and the aspirant reaches higher and higher planes of consciousness. Thus, we find that theoretically Tantra is concerned with 'Tattva and Mantra', but essentially with spiritual realisation.

Tantras believe in two-fold evolutions together with involutions—simultaneously taking place both in the domains of objects ('artha') and logos ('sabda') and finally involving them in Sakti inheriting in Siva, the supreme Experience i.e. Siva-Sakti identity. Two moments are conceived in this sphere—one is very subtle, realizable in contemplative meditation—the other is a state of Indeterminacy, quiet and absolutely pure, realizable only in intuitive intellection. Hence in Agamas, Siva is thought of as both Nishkala (devoid of Kalas, Transcendents) and Sakala (with kalas, emergence or immanent).

The Tantras believe in the principle of polarity both in its original and derivative forms. The whole creative process emanates from it and then evolves only to involve. First, there is that alogical integrated whole, symbolised as 'Nada-bindu', the possible ground or locus for all cosmic generation and fruition. The next step is 'Kala' and 'Varma' descending from the Bindu. Kala is that aspect of Reality which manifests as power for evolving the universe of experience and involving them again. Kala in this sense, must logically precede all 'descending movements' of Reality. It is in this stage, that space, time, substance and attributes are differentiated from the said indeterminate whole—all gradations and gradualness originate from it. 'Varna' here does not mean 'letter' or 'colour' but natural vibration of primordial object projected from perfect activity (Bindu). In this sense Varma sets and rules the order and harmony in creation.

The next step is 'tattva' and 'mantra'—these are subtle things in the realm of dynamic being and becoming. The third and final step is 'bhuvana' and 'pada'—'bhuvana' is the universe as it appears to our appreciating centres, it varies individual-wise. In 'pada' we get the actual formulation of that universe which subsists to a relevant given centre. In this way, we come down to this perceptible world of names and forms and by reversing order we reach the realm of supreme experience. There is a saying in the Tantras, those who know 'Sadadhvan' knows everything of the tantras.

The supreme experience is 'Siva' in the Tantras. Such Experience has a dual aspect—'Niskala' and 'Sakala', as they have been called. 'Niskala' is indeterminate experience beyond 'Nada-Bindu-Kala' quiet and 'nirvikalpaka' or static, while the latter is 'Siva' in his own nature to be and become all. The 'nishkala' Siva or pure or Para Brahman is 'Tat' when contemplated as 'Nirguna' in terms of negation; it is again in its dynamic aspect 'Sat' to be and become. 'Tat—Sat' is ultimately the a-logical, synthetic integrated whole, the supreme experience known otherwise as the 'Absolute' in the Tantras.



A SCOOP

FROM HEAVEN

VIVEK BHATTACHARYA

HE other day I had a peep into heaven. I died in the Willingdon Nursing Home. My doctor friends, Sengupta and Basumalik and sisters hesitated to declare that I was dead. All of them were my friends. I could hear the high, wailing voice of my beloved wife who had been lamenting that she could not wear the new gold bangles which I had ordered for her. In India widows do not wear bangles. I saw Anjana Sen consoling my relations.

Within a few moments I reached heaven over the light blue azure horizon, which I had seen while on earth, in the paintings of dear Svetoslav Roerich.

A handsome heavenly messenger greeted me with a smile and in no time led me to the room of Chitra Gupta, Accountant-General, in heaven. He was on long leave and, his second in command, Bichitragupta was officiating. In less than a minute the accounts were cleared.

"Fifty-fifty, my dear. Your pious deeds and sins cancel each other. You have the pleasant option of choosing between hell and heaven. It is entirely left to you. Be quick. Do you prefer heaven or hell?"

The newly appointed Vigilence Officer immediately checked the accounts. Too many persons were reaching heaven so hell was almost depopulated. Satan represented that owing to men bribing the gods rather heavily out of unaccounted money, his hell was almost without new exodus from earth.

"Be quick! Heaven or hell, what's your choice?"

With bewildered perplexity, I replied hesitatingly, "Well Sir, as you have been so kind, as to ask me please send me to the department of litterateurs—the writer's department."

At this reply the Personal Secretary attached to Bichitragupta quickly said: "Writers! What writers? I mean which category of writers? Journalists? Historians? Research scholars holding seminars? Novelists? Essay writers? Poets? What? Be precise, my dear."

I found it rather difficult to answer so I pleaded, "The General Department of the litterateur."

"Good heavens! The chap had been a journalist. Beware of him. Lead him to the General Department of top writers. Keep an eye on him and see that he does not scoop any interesting article in heaven."

With a puff from a Lucknow hookah obviously presented recently by a Nawab, Bichitragupta indicated that I was to follow the heavenly messenger.

"The divine man hissed into my ears. "O Sir," you are very lucky. He is in an extremely fine mood, because he has just got a promotion. Chitragupta is going to retire soon. Now tell me which writers you want to meet first."

"Who are the more popular writers here?" I said.

"Of late, Marx Maharaj has become quite popular with us. He is taking regular Seminars with divine men and explaining how, even in heaven, we poor messengers are exploited by the bosses. I agree with him, I am tired of my job."

I said, "How long have you been on this job?"

He said, "It must be more than a millennium now."

I said, "Good heavens! Are you a member of the Man Union?"

He said, "Of course, I am."

I heard a melody. The sound came softly from nearby. It was close, but I could not determine the



direction. Soon I was amazed to discover that it was the echo of a Tagore song—Rabindra Sangeet.

I asked the divine messenger, "Who is singing?"

He said, "It is Narada. He is learning Rabindra Sangeet. Recently there was a meeting of philosophers from the east and west representing the Hindus, the Muslims, the Christians, the Sikhs, the Jains and the Jews. They all agreed that Tagore's songs had the essence of all religious thoughts and were above all ism's. So they unanimously agreed that the Court music in heaven would be Rabindra Sangeet. Narada has been appointed the divine musician on an ad hoc basis. He will be confirmed only after he completes his training. Poor man he is very worried about his confirmation."

I saluted Tagore. Very affectionately he asked me about Kazi Nazrul Islam.

I said, "Sir, as you must have heard, he has been silenced by nature. Poor man, he is saved from the miseries of his surroundings. He can't talk." I asked the divine messenger rather foolishly, "Is there no language problem here?

The poet heard me. He said, "Oh, no. Just like your United Nations we have a fine arrangement of listening to any language of our choice. Those head phones translate everything into the language of your choice. This latest device was introduced by Dag Hammarskjöld. When I sing in Bengali, you can listen to that song in any language you like—English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Tamil, Telugu, Marathi, Punjabi, Oriya and Sindhi."

"Are you hungry? Would you like me to get you some grapes?"

The poet got me honey-sweet grapes from the vine creepers hanging all around. I remembered my little daughter on earth. She was very fond of grapes.

I said, "Sir, how do you spend your time here? Do you have any specific work?"

He patted me affectionately. You were a newspaper correspondent, weren't you?"

I said vainly, "Sir, I also wrote many books on you in English, Bengali, Hindi and Urdu."

With a smile he asked me, "Did you care to read my books before writing them? Are your books original by themselves? That's the general practice now. People write on persons without reading their works!"

I was slightly taken aback. Till now I had not read his complete works.

"You were asking me how I spend my time. So long we have had no work here. We sing, walk and generally enjoy ourselves. Of late, the writers have formed a club. They hold regular sittings. The younger writers who joined us recently have put forward a good suggestion. They have suggested that we send our representatives to the earth or go ourselves and revise our books. We are all outdated, they said. So the writers are busy revising their works on earth."

I said, "It really is interesting. Can I go and meet some of them?"

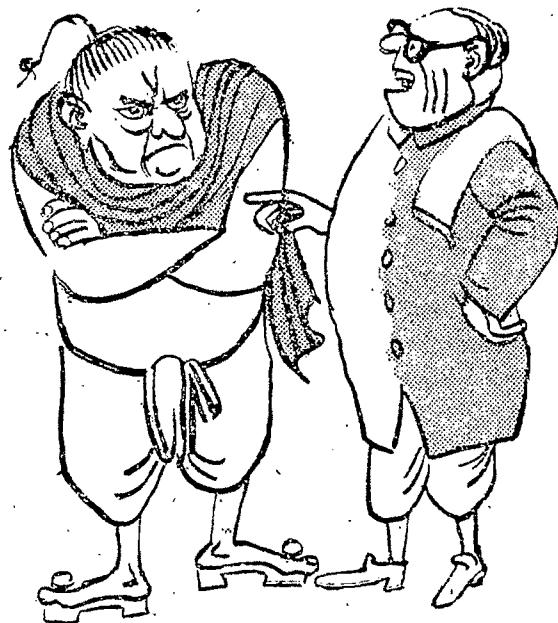
The poet agreed.

I entered a big hall. It seemed small seminars were being held. The first person who attracted my notice was an iron man occupying a huge seat surrounded by some learned scholars. I did not recognise him.

The poet said, "Have you forgotten your manners? Salute him. He is Chanakya the great. The people around him are all Sanskrit scholars from Germany, Tirupati and Bhatpara. They are his literary agents. They represent fourteenth century, nineteenth century and twentieth century Sanskrit learning on earth."

The literary agents greeted us. Chanakya did not move at all. One literary agent was saying "Carry on Sir, Education has no value in life. It





cannot get you anything in life. Far from assigning a place higher than a king you cannot even place him near the ordinary member of a modern community. It is not education that pays but your wit, your art of flattery, your power to dominate, your sense of manoeuvering things that can bring you success in life. Please delete the word education from your sloka."

"No Vidyaattanachanripattancha business, be practical my dear", muttered a second scholar.

Chanakya was a sorry sight. Poor man, he was looking so helpless and sad.

At a distance I saw Parasuram, the famous Rajsekhar Bose of Chalantika dictionary fame.

I asked the poet, "Is it not Rajsekhar Babu?"

"Yes, that's right. That is the dictionary department and there people are not known by names but by their dictionaries. For instance, there is Oxford, there is Cambridge, there is Webster. They are revising their dictionaries."

"I was impressed by the classless society there. I was never looked down upon by any of the writers although none of my books ran into a second edition.

A literary agent dragged me physically to present me to Chambers.

"Here is a man who has just come from earth, Sir. You better ask him about the dictionary. He can give you first hand information".

Turning to me he asked "Yes, gentleman, you better tell him, have these words any real use today on earth. Honesty? Sincerity? Goodness? Sympathy? Love? Affection? Regard? Moral values? Justice? Merit? Have they any real significance? Are they not really obsolete now?

A lone voice protested, "Will anybody buy the book if the size is cut?"

I winked at the divine messenger.

The holy man whispered. "It is a publisher."

"A publisher?" I exclaimed.

How could a publisher enter heaven."

"I concede that publishers exploits writers. But out of the money earned this way, some of them

build churches and temples before they die so you will find quite a few of them here."

Suddenly, a youthful man appeared before us. He was trying to hum a modern poem.

The poet asked me to salute him. I shook hands. It was a very familiar face.

"What's the latest from earth, young man?" he asked.

"You have not started revising your books?"

"Not yet. Waiting for my turn", he nodded with a smile.

"Sir, whatever the revised versions of your complete works, I can vouchsafe one sentence worth millions of pounds will stay on earth as long as man lives."

Whether under capitalism, socialism, humanism or a stage without ism, whether in New Delhi, Peking, London, Washington or Moscow people will never think of editing that line.

Shakespeare looked at me helplessly.

"You see, I am brushing my knowledge of modern poems. I do not recollect any of my own pieces. Will you please recite that line?"

I said, "Who in these hard days of ration, control and inflation can afford to forget that line, Sir? Don't you remember writing that famous line —Fools give feasts and wise men eat them!"



GOPAL BHAUMIK

ON

TRANSLATION IN BENGALI LITERATURE



HOUGH there are different opinions about the feasibility of translation from one language into another, it cannot be gainsaid that translation has always been regarded as an effective medium for inter-communication in a multi-lingual world. It would have been an ideal thing for international understanding if we could have one world language. But unfortunately as circumstances prevail to-day, we find it even difficult to have a lingua franca for a vast multi-lingual country like India. Is it not, therefore, wholly unreal to think of a common world language when we know that this world is divided into many sovereign countries at different levels of cultural and economic development and having different political systems?

Yet due to the unbelievable scientific and technological progress of the last fifty years, the world to-day has shrunk greatly and we feel an ardent desire to know what is happening in the cultural field in other countries. How are we to fulfill this except through the medium of translation? May be that translation from one country's literature into another country's language will not be perfect. Even then is it not better to read the literary master-pieces of other countries in imperfect translation than not reading them at all? Those who are purists in regard to translation may say whatever they like, but most sensible people would like to have a taste of foreign literatures translated in their own language for they know that it is not possible for any individual to learn all the languages of the world and read all the books in the original.

Whatever may be said against the merits of translation, it has always been regarded as a humanistic activity and it has been found from experience that a living literature, always abounds in translations. Indeed, the richness of a literature is sometimes judged by the body of translations it has produced. In spite of the different levels of cultural development, the human mind is basically

the same all over the world and that makes translation possible from one language into another. We in India have about two hundred years' acquaintance with the English language and literature and our literature has been variously influenced thereby. In some respects it may be said to have been modelled on English literature. English literature has been one of the best in the world for quite a few centuries and it still holds its sway. This abounding influence of English literature is as much due to its original creations as to its rich store of translations from languages almost of every country of the world. In English there are translators who have not originally composed a single line of their own and yet they are not less renowned than creative writers. This is a proof of the rational attitude of English readers who think that good translations of worthy books from other languages are even better than so-called original books of dubious merit. And what can we say of ourselves, the so-called middle class intellectual beneficiaries of English education in India? Do we not derive all our knowledge and pleasure out of English books mostly? Even our rapport with the literature of other countries is established through the medium of English in most cases.

Anyway, I have already digressed a little. The subject which I propose to discuss in the present article is the place and progress of translation in Bengali literature. I must at the outset say that Bengali literature as a whole does not have a rich store of translations in spite of the fact that our literature in prose particularly owes its origin to translations. It first began with the Christian Missionaries who created Bengali literary prose out of their necessity for preaching the message of the Bible among the native population. Similar necessity for self-defence induced our early prose writers to have recourse to translation for writing polemical treatises. We may easily think of Raja Ram Mohan Roy who translated profusely from Sanskrit to engage in polemics against over-zealous Christian Missionaries of the day. Such was the beginning of modern Bengali prose. The next important

writer of Bengali prose of the 19th century was Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar who is truly called the father of modern Bengali prose. If we evaluate his creative writings it is easy to find that his translations easily outnumber his original creations. He introduced a distinctly original style in Bengali prose which he employed in translating Sanskrit and English literatures into Bengali.

TAGORE

After Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar the great age of Renaissance set in culminating finally in Rabindra Nath Tagore, the greatest man of letters of both the 19th and 20th centuries. It was an age of our still closer contact with the literary traditions of the West mainly through English literature and this age abounds in original creations of a varied nature. This was the age of literary giants like Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Michael Madhusudan Dutt and the last but not the least Rabindra Nath Tagore who revolutionised our literature in both fields of prose and poetry. Great original thinkers and writers as they were, they had hardly any need to replenish Bengali literature through translations from other languages even though they did some translation work occasionally merely to relieve their long periods of creativity. But when we remember that they had given to Bengali literature the novel, the short story, drama, essay belles lettres, lyric poetry, sonnet etc., borrowed from the West, it may not be possible for us to deny together that this process was somewhat akin to translation in spirit, yet not verbatim reproduction of such genres. Anyway the passage of time has made us so used to these literary forms that we can hardly recognize them to be foreign.

The Tagore period in our literature stretches well over 50 years upto 1941. The greatness of Tagore lay in the fact that he had an absolutely open mind—keenly receptive of various influences from outside. He had the genius to absorb all influences and stamp them with his own originality. His original creations in all the branches of Bengali literature are too many and too varied to be recounted here. And yet he could spare time for translating verse from foreign literatures. His translations if not numerous are rare gems like his original writings. Among the other writers who enriched Bengali literature through translations during this period mention may be made of Girish Chandra Ghosh, particularly for his translation of 'Macbeth', Jyotirindra Nath Tagore, Pramatha Chaudhuri and his wife Shrimati Indira Devi Chaudhurani, Chandi Charan Sen, Hemendra Kumar Roy, Dinendra Kumar Roy, Nripendra Krishna Chatterjee, Pabitra Ganguly, Achintya Kumar Sen Gupta, Probodh Kumar Sanyal, Gokul Nag, Kalidas Nag, Premendra Mitra, Buddhadev Bose, Sudhindra Nath Datta, Bishnu Dey, Bhabani Mukhopadhyay and others. But barring two or three of the writers mentioned above, none of the others had taken up translation as their vocation. Most of them are original writers who have occasionally translated some notable pieces of foreign literature for us. Those still active among them occasionally oblige us with some translations or another from foreign literature even to-day.

FROM ENGLISH

Most of the translations of this period were from the English language. It might have been a translation from Turgenev or from Knut Hamsun, but the translation was almost invariably done at second hand, from the English translation of the

original book. The only notable exceptions in this regard were Jyotirindra Nath Tagore, Pramatha Chaudhuri and Shrimati Indira Devi Chaudhurani. They were scholars in the French language and translated directly from the French. In fact they were mostly responsible for creating a taste for French literature among the educated intellectuals of Bengal. Unfortunately, however, this admirable tradition has not been followed in the later period, perhaps because of a lack of linguists among our translators. Whatever translation is done in Bengali even to-day, is mostly from the English language. Unless the book itself is originally in English, Bengali readers can hardly have the advantage of a first-hand translation. It is often the story of a translation of a translation—resulting in artificiality, lack-lustreiness and deficiency in emotional depth.

Translation work in Bengali literature has all along had a haphazard growth due to various reasons. Translation as a regular activity has never been encouraged in our literature. The readership of translated literature has always been limited due mostly to the fact that our readers come from the English-knowing classes and the translations we produce are also mostly from the English language. Why should a reader who can read Jean Paul Satre in English translation care to read a second-hand translation in Bengali of the same from the English language? This is definitely one limiting factor. The second limiting factor is the vagary of our publishers who usually do not put any premium on translation. They would always prefer a so-called original book of dubious merit to a translation of a genuinely good book. That is how we find the spectacle of petty plagiarists attaining great fame as original writers. The work of translation is really very exacting, time-consuming and a genuinely difficult task. But the rate of charges for translation even if accepted is so poor that nobody, who can afford to do so, will agree to take up the work. These are some of the reasons why Bengali literature has remained very poor in translation all along.

Unfortunately for us there has been no marked change in this direction even after independence. We had at least hoped for a better state of affairs in the post-independence period. During this period, a class of neo-literates sprung up in our midst and many among them do not know the English language. The growth of translation in Bengali literature would have at least aided in completing their education. Our expectation has, however, been mostly belied in the post-independence period. The work of translation has been left to take care of itself as it had been doing all along. This is still determined by the wilful vagaries of our publishers who are mostly concerned with money-making and in some cases by the sweet will of discerning writers who are, of course, quite few in number. As a result, there has only been some lop-sided growth in translation in Bengali literature. Compelled by circumstances most of our translators cannot engage themselves as wholetime translators, neither can they translate the best literary pieces published in other countries as their chances of publication may not be high. Saleability being the only criterion of judgement, we find that sometimes a current best-seller is translated into Bengali immediately after its publication in the country of its origin while it is not possible for us to get Bengali translations of other renowned authors of that very country. This is a sad state of affairs which has been continuing for long and there is hardly any sign of a change yet. If we look at English literature we can easily detect

our weakness in this respect. If a man is proficient in English only, it is possible for him to read and enjoy the literatures of all other countries. Can we make such a claim for Bengali? Unfortunately not. A man who knows Bengali only, can never aspire to read and enjoy the literatures of all other countries through the medium of Bengali as we do not have translations of many notable foreign books in Bengali. Whatever translations we have they are not only inadequate in number, in many cases they are not representative too.

POST-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD

We had, however, expected a better deal for translation in Bengali in the post-independence period in view of the fact that Bengali has been made the medium of instruction for higher studies and Bengali literature cannot be enriched without suitable translations from all the notable languages of the world. It was naturally expected, therefore, that in the changed context, the work of translation would receive some incentive from the State. But this expectation remains yet to be fulfilled. This incentive has neither come from the public sector nor from the private sector. After independence both the Central and the State Governments have instituted coveted awards for original literary creation in the Bengali language. But the work of translation which is so essential to the development of literature has been totally excluded from such literary awards. This is certainly regrettable.

The need for translation has, from another viewpoint, gone up to a large extent in the post-independence era. What I mean is the need for translating literary creations of merit from all other major languages of India to-day. We find people holding forth glibly on national and emotional integration of the country. But I think we do not have clear ideas as to how it can be achieved. One of the best means for achieving this, I believe, is to try to understand the languages and literatures of our sister States. Due to the linguistic barriers this understanding is possible only through translations. We in Bengal are almost completely in the dark as to what is happening in Tamil, Telegu, Malayalam, Hindi and Urdu in spite of the fact that all these are Indian languages. Some of these languages have a rich and colourful literature too. There is no excuse for my not knowing other important Indian literatures. Recently the activities of the Sahitya Akademi have, of course, provided some rays of hope in this regard. This State-sponsored organisation has started to publish translations in Bengali from the other major Indian languages. This is indeed a very good attempt at promoting inter-State cultural understanding which can ultimately lead to emotional integration. The resources of the Sahitya Akademi are, I think, limited and I cannot fully vouchsafe if this laudable scheme will be implemented in full. However, a good beginning is always welcome.

Translators in the post-independence period have also derived some sustenance from some other extraneous sources. The establishment of diploma-

tic relations with foreign countries has brought India closer to some developed nations of the world which are eager to see that their literature is made known to us at least through the major languages of India. Automatically they have had to seek the help of our writers and poets for translating their books into Bengali. Among these countries USA and USSR have been spending large sums of money in getting some of their books translated into Bengali. Payment is usually made at a handsome rate. Though many of these books selected by the authorities concerned are meant to spread the ideology of the sponsoring country and as such are mostly of ephemeral interest, yet in some cases at least we have translations of literary masterpieces too. In the case of such translation, translators have hardly any freedom of choice in the matter of selecting books to be translated and as such the lop-sided growth of translation continues as before. This problem cannot be properly tackled if our publishers do not come forward to recognise the value of translation in the growth of our literature. It is only they who can encourage the work of translation and can ensure the publication of the translations of really meritorious books. We must not forget that the truly original writers in any age cannot be many in number. Yet in present-day Bengali literature we have more writers and more poets than genuine readers. Many of them again pass as original only because of the readers being ill-informed. Even adaptations from foreign literatures go without proper acknowledgement and are promoted by commercial publicity as original works. This type of chicanery and deception is possible only because the field of translation in Bengali literature is not at all developed. Had it been developed the mask of originality would have automatically come off from many faces. If we have translations of the best literary works of the world in our literature, this will also provide an opportunity to our discerning readers to judge our original writers by the highest possible standards.

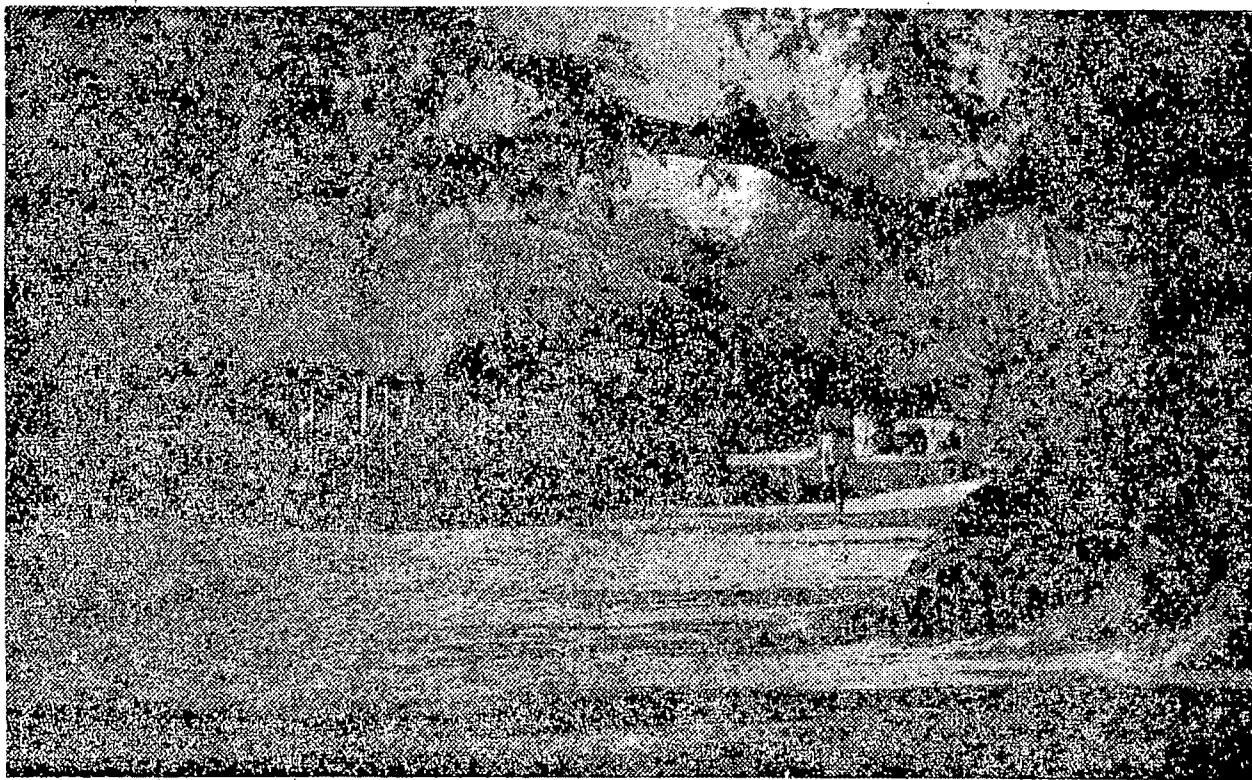
TRANSLATORS' SOCIETY

All these considerations induce me to think that the work of translation should receive proper encouragement in the interests of our own literature. Though our publishers and general readers are still apathetic to this important subject, it is good to find that our translators as a whole are conscious of their heavy responsibility, and on their own they recently formed a Translators' Society with the sole aim of improving the standard and quality of our translation. Mrs. Leela Roy who is herself an able translator, is one of the prime movers behind this Society which has an ambitious scheme of lending technical know-how and if necessary, collaborators to our prospective translators. So, however, bleak the present prospect may be I have every hope that the situation will look up in the years to come only if the Government and the publishing firms including the editors of periodicals in the private sector agree to provide more encouragement and incentive to our translators.



SHREE SHREE RADHA KRISHNA

THE TRYST



SUNIL KUMAR DUTT

DAKSHINA RANJAN BOSE



THE hill road — so very undulating. There is a locality near the market. Dispensary, shops, post office—all are near the market.

A little way ahead again begins that lone street which zig-zags along the lap of the hill. On either side of the street grow numerous wild flowers of different colours uncared for.

Swapan immensely enjoys walking alone along this hill track back from his office. At a little distance is the first turn at right, and a straight look from this bend—and another comes into view. An unmetalled road leads south from this second bend. Everyday Sohagini sets up shop under a large banana tree by the side of this new unmetalled road. This was no shop in the strict sense of the term—a temporary shack where she sells tea, biscuits, bidi and cigars. May be the shop is small, but it has a history. In the absence of her father Sohagini herself carries the burden of that history. People

call her Sohagi. But Sohagini never resents it, rather it pleases her. She likes a small name. It sounds sweeter to her ears. The youngmen of the area who come to know of her liking feel amused and give her an even smaller name—"Kanchi". But the name does not please Sohagini, as that is no echo of her original one.

Sohagini's shop remains always crowded—three or four customers always stand there. A little colony sprang up very recently near the shop which stands on the way to the colony. The people of this colony as well as those passing by the main road come to buy bidis or cigars from this shop which is the only one in that area. Apart from this Sohagi has a personal attraction. The youngsters very often come to the shop to take rest in the shade of the large tree often unnecessarily.

Swapan has to pass by this shop on his way to and from office. Naturally, he is a regular customer of the shop. He stays with a sober family in the colony as a paying guest. When Swapan first came here he stayed in an ordinary hotel at the market place. But soon he found it impossible for him to pay the exorbitant hotel charge of Rs. 60 or 70 per month. It was too high for a clerk like him. He

found he could not meet his other personal expenses, nor could he send money to his family after paying the hotel bill. So Swapan had to leave the hotel and seek haven in the colony, where he finds he can pay for his board and lodging by spending only half the amount he would have been spending in the hotel.

Swapan works in the Military Accounts Department. It is about three months that he has been transferred here. Barring the heavy expenses Swapan likes this place in all other respects. He simply becomes overwhelmed looking at the dark patches of clouds covering the peaks all around. The whistle of trains at the distant station echoes up the hill tops, and makes him spellbound. The local people are also very simple. Swapan likes Sohagi for her simplicity.

Of course, Swapan did not feel anything during the first two or three days. But one day, all of a sudden, he met Sohagi eye to eye at the road turning on his way back from work. Instantly her face beamed with a smile and joy. It gladdened Swapan very much and sponged all the day's fatigue from his breast. Then, as usual, he bought a packet of cigars, lighted one from it and traded gossip with the girl from his perch on a slab of stone near the shop. Then he started for home.

Days pass in this way. Customers, come and go till it is evening when Sohagi hurriedly dismantles her shop and heads home. Once while trudging home at dusk with heavy loads on her head and shoulder and also some in her hands Sohagi ran across Swapan on the way. They walked side by side talking with each other. Swapan again and again offered to help Sohagi by sharing her burden. But every time he failed—still he tried. Sohagi refused to share her load with Swapan. She felt qualms to bother a big man like Swapan. Swapan every day accompanies Sohagi upto her bustee by going down-hill about a mile along the road and then returns to his own shelter in the colony.

That day Sohagi was talking about her father. She would not have to carry the load if her father would have been with her. Swapan could not even think there was any complication involved in the story of her father. Her father worked as a gardener in the house of a rich man in the town. He could not maintain his family with his earning. So he had very hard days. One of Sohagi's aunts was very rich. Her father often would get monetary help from the aunt. In the midst of this hardship her father lost his job for demanding increased pay. The aunt then came to their rescue. With the funds supplied by the aunt Sohagi's father could set up shop under the large tree only two years ago. During these two years Sohagi's father was able to maintain the shop with the help of Sohagi. But suddenly one day her father left his house and never did he return again. From that very day onwards there was also no trace of her aunt. That was a mystery to the neighbours ever since.

But it was good for Sohagi that the shop had been already running well and she was by that time well experienced about its management. Otherwise Sohagi would have been in great distress.

Swapan heard the story from Sohagi. He realised her distress and was in full sympathy with her. Like others Swapan would also call her by the name of "Kanchi". But once she objected and said, "Why do you call me 'Kanchi'? My name is Sohagi. You call me by that name."

Swapan said, "What's there to it. 'Kanchi' is a sweeter name than Sohagi. But Swapan's reply

could not please Sohagi. Her mind became heavy and she kept silent. After a while she again said, "All right, if you don't like the name Sohagi, you call me 'Kusum'. Nobody now calls me by that name." Her eyes were filled with tears. Since then Swapan call her "Kusum". The meeting between Sohagi and Swapan has now become a daily affair. Even in holidays Swapan makes it a point to go to Sohagi's shop and indulge in light gossip with her.

Several months pass. Life here no more seems dull and drab to Swapan. Everyday Kusum eagerly waits for him. This very fact creates a tingling sensation in his mind—a dream which always keeps him alive.

Once, while getting back home with Swapan, Kusum suddenly nestled very much close to him and said, "Would you not once come to my house? Please come tomorrow. There is a festival at my place tomorrow."

Swapan asked, "What is the festival about? Is it to finalise your marriage?"

Kusum blushed deeply and also became a bit angry. In a choked voice she said, "All right, you would never come to my place." But at the next moment her anger faded at the sight of a broad smile on Swapan's face. Swapan gave her word that he would come to her place tomorrow by leaving his office earlier.

But that day Swapan had to take leave of duty from his office for one month. He got a telegram from his house at Krishnagar. His mother was lying seriously ill. Naturally he could not keep Kusum's invitation. He wanted to convince Kusum of his difficulties and went straight to her shop from his office where he had been detained for a long time for making arrangements for his long leave. But he could find the shop nowhere under that large tree. A local boy said she had got back home much earlier. Swapan planned to visit her place before leaving for Krishnagar. He went there and nearing the gate of her cottage he softly called by her name. Kusum herself came out and went back almost at the same moment. Swapan noticed her woe-begone face and tears in her eyes. After a moment Kusum's younger brother came out and took him in with much warmth. The room where Swapan was led to was a mean thatched room in which Kusum was seated silent in a corner. The whole house wore an air of festival. Swapan surveyed the room with his shifting gaze. There was no eye-catching modern decoration anywhere, but the whole room was very wonderfully tidy. Beds on two old cots were covered with clean sheets. At a corner of the room was a bunch of potted fragrant flowers.

Swapan could have guessed something special behind Kusum's invitation to him much earlier, and now he found it true. Kusum's mother made everything clear and soon started treating Swapan to various delicacies which she herself prepared all day.

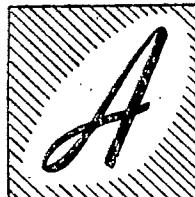
By this time Kusum's anger vanished completely and she asked why Swapan could not come earlier as promised. She became sad and terribly shocked at the news of his mother's illness. At this time Kusum's mother came in and declared that her daughter's marriage had just been finalised.

Swapan refused to believe her mother's words. It was almost impossible for him to accept the reality. He looked at Kusum and still felt that her eager eyes were beckoning him with utmost sincerity.

• ASIT •

ON

THE SYNTHESIS IN MODERN INDIAN PAINTING



ALL art originates in an act of intuition or vision, says Sir Herbert Read. This vision begins definitely with sense perception but seems to expand at once into mental images. It is a kind of awareness of the image which is a mode of perception, related to intuition, and distinct from merely sharp consciousness or plain knowledge. Awareness in modern Indian art begins with a strong impression, usually of the senses, and it translates itself immediately into a state of consciousness which absolves all the activities of the mind in the moment's concentration of the object.

From this awareness of the individual phenomenon, grow images and ideas and the imagination is never far from actual experience. This lends an emotional quality to art which has the power of synthesizing even logically inconsistent elements into a harmonious whole. The Indian art scene in the 20th century presents a striking kaleidoscope of the seemingly most disparate derivations.

By the end of the 18th century Indian art of the Islamic period was on the wane. The solvent elements of the alien Islamic culture had already been absorbed into the Indian tradition by a slow, yet steady process of assimilation which is a hallmark of Indian aesthetic creativity. The Moghul style of painting was now well past its heyday and had fallen into decadence. The time was ripe for another artistic osmosis. This was provided by the West.

With the advent of the 19th century there was a very positive urge to resuscitate the lost spirit and beauty of native Indian art. Generally an increasing number of genuine masterpieces of ancient Indian art started to be cultivated. In 1862-87 Sir Alexander Cunningham inspected most of the extant monuments and collected objects art from North and Central India and Jas Burgess undertook a similar task in Western India; while H. Consens explored the art of the South. In 1879 Jas Fergusson brought out his 'History of Indian and Eastern Architecture'.

In 1896 J. Griffith published his thesis on the Ajanta Murals and in 1902 the Archaeological Survey of India started its annual Reports while in 1905 the law for the protection of ancient monuments was enacted. This new synthetic approach was first applied to Indian art by E. B. Havell, Principal of the Calcutta School of Arts, and A. K. Coomarswamy.

This wave of revivalism of traditional art led to a Romantic renaissance in Indian cultural circles and reminded one of the 19th century Romantic poets like Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats and Byron avidly studying Mediaeval European art. Indian art in the 20th century endeavours to build a bridge between age-old native painting with the Western pop art of the sixties.

COMPROMISE UNDER BENGAL SCHOOL

Under the influence of Havell, Abanindranath Tagore tried to harmonize the diametrically opposite tendencies in contemporary art by experimenting in a technique eclectically culled from Moghul and Rajput miniatures, the Ajanta murals, even Chinese and Japanese ink paintings. The works of Abanindranath Tagore were emotional and sentimental, like his painting of "Ashoka's Queen and the Bodhi Tree" wrapped in a vague atmosphere and vaguer emotions, an Indian variant of late Pre-Raphaelitism. Gogonendranath Tagore's works present a happy synthesis of the lyrical and the philosophical as is displayed in his famous work "Light and Shadow", but his synthesis of ideas is ordered and dominated by his religious beliefs.

The aesthetics of Rabindranath Tagore ran parallel to Buddaghosh's that art is a synthesis of the objective aspect of experience and the subjective which is consciousness. In Rabindranath's painting "The Erasure" (1927) and "Black and White Threads" we derive pleasure not from being aware of the disparity in any stated likeness but in the opposite activity of our discerning the design and unity latent in a multiform picture. This is no doubt a form of reconciliation. His other works "The Tender on the Stony Hard" and the "Veiled Woman" (1928-30) effect a fusion of the primary and second-

AMRITA BAZAR PATRIKA

ary imaginations which according to Coleridge is the height of true synthesis.

Ravi Verma and Nanda Lal Bose had wrought a revolution in art themes by their emphasis on aesthetic perception. They laid special stress on man's aesthetic sensibility towards his environment which we witness in Ravi Verma's "Mohini" (1885) and "Shakuntala". Nanda Lal Bose believed in aesthetic and instrumental appraisement of nature and the three dimensional intuitive discernment viz, (a) presence and feeling (b) intuition—the undefined state and (c) intuition—the defined state. This leads his painting towards intuitive unity where emerge three distinct features i.e. (a) the full awareness (b) the beautiful and (c) the beatific vision of Dante's Beatrice. The tradition of Nanda Lal Bose was followed by D. Roy Chowdhury, Mukul Dey, Bireswar Sen, Sarda Ukil, K. N. Mazumdar, and Asit Kumar Haldar, the pioneers of the Bengal School who wrought a renaissance of national art.

INTERNATIONAL TRENDS

The reactionary puritanism and the soft sentimentality of the Bengal School could, however, no longer appeal to a younger generation thinking in terms of political and social revolution, of modernization and industrialization of the country, of contact with the masses. International trends attained prominence more and more.

Amrita Sher Gill by employing the four elements of visual form viz., colours, lines, spaces and planes in "Child Wife" (1936), achieved a wedding of the disparate elements of modern art. She adopts abstract three-dimensional depth as effected by planes in the "Hill-Women" where colours, lines and spaces without a vestige of representation introduces the third dimension of depth which kindles the imagination more than space, as does Picasso's "Night Fishing at Antibes" (1938). It is a synthesis of Hegelian dialectics and Bradleian time-consciousness. "Bramhachari's", "The Little Elephant" and the "Fruit Vendors" exhibit a process of formulation by controlled imagic interplay and conception.

The school of Jamini Roy including Manishi Dey, Sailoz Mukherjee in the East, and K. Sreenivasulu in the South, have tried to revive traditionalism by falling back on other, not yet exploited aspects of ancient or of folk art. The Santhal paintings of Jamini Roy including the "Santhal Girl" (1925), "Santhal Drummers", "Santhal Dance" (collected by Minalini Emerson) and "Santhal Couple" (collection of W. G. Archer, 1934) reveal themselves in the balance of discordant qualities: of the general with the concrete; the idea with the image; the individual with the representative. These still subordinate art to nature, the manner to the matter strictly conforming to the standard prescribed in "Biographia Literaria" of Coleridge.

His paintings "Christ with Disciples," "Head of Christ" and "Christ with the Cross" present a synthetic view of Christianity and Hinduism as does T. S. Eliot in his "Wasteland." W. G. Archer in his book "India and Modern Art" states that the primitive Kalighat art style of Jamini Roy synthesized diverse elements of Byzantine painting, Western art, Picasso's style and the styles of Van Gogh, Modigliani, and Amrita Sher Gill.

The war of 1939-45 accentuated a tendency among contemporary Indian painters to turn away from the actual and live in an ideal world in the mind—a kind of stream of consciousness found in the novels of James Joyce. They live under the pressure of events and always crave to explore the unconscious. This impressionistic trend in painting is fervently advocated in India by N. S. Bendre, Kalyan Sen, D. J. Joshi, Kanwal Krishna, K. C. S. Panikar, S. B. Chavda, K. H. Hebbar, B. Sanjai, K. S. Kulkarni, Lakshman Rai and Rathin Mitra who have tried to merge the traditional folk style of native Indian with Western impressionist-cum-expressionist motifs.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SYNTHESIS

K. H. Ara and H. A. Gade have based their technique of intuitive harmony on Jungian and Freudian psycho-analysts — withdrawal from the objective world to uninhibited inner fantasy. S. B. Palsikar and Samant have resorted to abstractionism and cubism to translate the tumult of their emotions directly into paint. George Keyt, the 'Indian Picasso', uses no suggestions but relies on the power of colour and movement to express feelings. M. F. Hussain in his latest painting on display at the Chanakya Art Gallery, New Delhi, entitled "Conquest of Moon" has used the associative power of imagery drawn from primitive art. The introduction of Garuda, the mythological bird of India in the said painting clarifies the idea. He has tried to exploit the irrational, the intuitive, the unconscious which bring to the surface fears and terrors which reason tries to banish. Amina Ahmed, Sehgal and Ram Kumar blend the symbolic and decorative abstraction in vivid splashes of colour.

Thus modern Indian painting is not a mere renaissance of the past. It is a revolutionary creed which can attain fulfilment only by a synthesizing spirit and a disciplined imagination. Dr. Johnson, called this *Discordia Concord*, the device of balancing the incongruous juxtapositions, of fusing the formal technique of the painter with his inner vision and the outer world.

The trend today in India gravitates towards the geometrical in painting, to attain a more accurate unity. Painting strives to bridge radicalism and conformism, subjectivity and objectivity in the true Buddhist spirit of the golden mean (Madhyam Marg)—the eternal cycle of thesis-anti-thesis-and synthesis.





T was a cold frosty December morning. The sun was just peeping through the mist. A thin film of steam was rising slowly from the ground, and the only sound heard then were the chorus of tropical birds. Some were pleasant crescendos beginning with short intermittent notes and ending in long-drawn whistles, and some others were soft and low-pitched melodies. I could see the sun rays had entered the forest through the mist and very closely grown trees forming distinct, visible shafts. I felt comfortable because the cold appeared less severe now. A few minutes earlier, a racket-tail drongo took to the wings at the approach of my car. Sailing over the road for a short distance it settled on a road-side tree. For some time then this bird flew whenever I tried to stalk it. I have a special liking for drongos and was therefore looking keenly to find out where it had settled this time. . . .

"Then I saw it! Not the bird that I had expected, but an enormous snake!"

"Some twenty yards ahead, where a shaft of sun light had fallen on the road, it stood. More than six feet of its length standing erect, the hood spread wide, it was swinging gently to left and right. What was more, from its sleek body a bluish

Prodyot Mohalanobish'

THE HOOD OF DEATH

glow was emanating. May be for a minute, or a little more, it thus stood, and then, slowly it turned towards me. Standing perfectly still it sized me up for a while, and then, lowering the raised body on the ground it crossed the road and melted into the dense undergrowth bordering the road. After waiting for some more minutes, for I did not want to pass by that deadly snake very close, I hurried off as best I could towards my destination. All-through the rest of my journey I thought of this majestic snake. So far I could see in that light and at that distance, the throat of the snake, as it faced me, was deep pink with golden-yellow bands where the body met the ground. The back, it appeared to me, was olive-green banded by ivory chevrons, and from the middle of the body upto the tip of its tail the olive-green changed into glossy black. It was the most beautiful, the most dreadful snake I had ever seen."

The above was the narration of an officer in the Indian Army and the incident happened in a forest road in Kohima some years ago. Only two aspects of the incident may appear unusual. One, whether a snake would stand erect and spread its hood while basking in the sun; and, the second, whether the snake had actually emanated a bluish glow as was seen by the narrator. The best explanation of the first is that the tingling warmth of the sun in that severe cold of Kohima could have created much sensation in that reptile and that it

demonstrated its sensation by that posture. As for the second, I think, when the sun ray, mixed with the slate coloured mist, reflected on the body of the snake of which olive-green and black were the dominant shades, it perhaps created that visual effect for a while. However, from the account of the officer it seems that he encountered a large *naja hannah* (hamadryad or king cobra).

The word 'naja' is obtained from 'naga', the Sanskrit for snake, to identify the most venomous snake, the cobra. We know that no snake is more widely known than the oriental cobra, *naja*, *naja*, and their Indian counterpart *naja naja*. According to the herpetologists or snake experts, the Indian cobra can spread its hood wider than any other cobra. The distinct figure behind the hood like an eye; or a circle, or a combination of circle-hook-circle, which according to Hindu tradition, is the marking of *Vishnupada* (the footprint of Lord Krishna) has lent a halo to this species.

With one-third of its body standing erect, the hood spread to a maximum, and the head bent a little forward is a defensive and challenging posture of a cobra. The most interesting aspect of the Indian cobra is that it is less capable in aiming its strike during day-time, and most of the day strikes are made with the mouth closed. Most of the night bites are accurate and seem to be fatal. The young cobras, in fact, are more aggressive and more likely to bite than the adults. The habit of spreading the hood, rearing and striking is fully developed when in the egg itself, and when only its head and some parts of the body emerge from the shell it spreads the hood and tries to strike the imaginary foe.

The largest in the cobra group is the hamadryad or king cobra (*naja hannah*) with a record length of 15 feet 10 inches. It is believed, however, that even larger hamadryads exist in the forest ranges of the Himalayas. The experts on the subject have observed that this is the only kind that makes its own nest. With the help of the forepart of its body, the female of the species drags dry leaves and sticks into a heap. It is a two-chambered nest. The lower is for the eggs and the upper is for the female to sit on. The male mounts constant guard over the nest on such occasions. It chaperons the female and strikes at anything suspicious or vexing. It becomes so alert and aggressive, at this time, that even the passing shadow of a flying bird causes it to strike. It is extremely dangerous for anyone to approach the nest at this time. Like all other snakes, hamadryads are also fond of the sun. During winter months these snakes sometimes are seen to lie on open ground in the forest or have climbed up a rock to bask in the heat of the sun.

One hears many tales about the aggressive nature of hamadryads and the speed at which they can travel. The following incident is one that would reveal the extent of their aggressiveness, intensity of venom, and, at times, how strangely they may behave. To the sceptic, of course, some parts of the happenings described below may appear as exaggerations. But since I know that the incident in its broad outline did happen, and the exaggerations, if any, are only in certain details, I have decided to put it as it was told by the two persons involved and also what was revealed subsequently. For a word of justification, I would only say that to the city-dwellers like us, who set up a din at the appearance of a little mouse in their flats, the situation is hardly conceivable how it is for a man walking along a jungle trail suddenly becomes confronted by a large hamadryad with half of its

fifteen-foot length standing erect, reared up with the hood spread widely. It is indeed a nerve wrecking experience.

However, not very long ago, a young forest ranger and a Tiprai assistant were marking the trees deep in the forest of Chittagong hill tracts for felling. Throughout the whole day the ranger pointed out the trees and the assistant marked them. When they thought that enough work had been done for the day, they decided to start their long down-hill journey back. After going only a short distance they stopped as an elephant began to trumpet frantically from somewhere below. This, however, did not worry them much for they were quite used to elephants in the jungle and knew well how to tackle such a situation. They only wondered what had enraged this animal. Standing still they tried to listen keenly in which direction the elephant was heading. After a while, when the shrill notes of trumpeting grew fainter and fainter, the two men continued their interrupted journey again.

Ten minutes of fast walk brought them to the spot from where the elephant had trumpeted. Here they stopped to survey the land flattened by the enraged animal when a movement caught their eyes. Before they could think of anything else a big hamadryad whipped round a bush, came straight towards the ranger for a few yards, and then struck! More by a stroke of good luck than for any other reason, the snake missed the ranger who, in the meantime, had staggered a few steps backward and fell. Instantly, of course, he stood up and ran helter-skelter down the hill like a mad man.

On reaching a comparatively open field in the forest he found his assistant who disappeared from the scene the moment he had a glimpse of the cobra. They then crossed a deep nullah scooped out by the rush of rain-water and decided to pause as much for regaining their breath as for a long-felt smoke. While they smoked, discussed and concluded that this was a nesting hamadryad, and the elephant surely had got bitten by it when feeding very near to its nest, and that it was only by the grace of God one of them was not lying dead behind, the last rays of the sun had turned the hills and forests into a vermillion red.

Having had rest and smoke and picking up the single-barreled shot-gun provided by their department for safety of the staff—so long forgotten by the ranger and clutched like a stick—they stood up. The ranger, perhaps to have a last look at the forest trail by which he burst out of the jungle for his life, turned round. But as he shifted his gaze from that direction to the rain-water nullah now, he froze dead! For, he looked straight at the snake, which had followed him for more than a quarter of a mile with great speed and accuracy and now in the nullah showed some three feet length of its body above, standing erect and perfectly still. The only movements the snake made, as he could see, was the flicking in and out of its long, quivering tongue. The ranger looked petrified at the expanded head of the hamadryad which now appeared like a red saucer. The more he looked at it, the more he felt helpless and incapable of saving himself from this pre-ordained and deadly pursuer. Gradually an uncanny feeling came over him and he began to perspire.

In unsteady hands he loaded the gun with one of the two bullets he had and fired, but the cobra

ducked into the drain like a flash at the same time. It was a miss, he could see. All this time he thought that his assistant must be standing somewhere behind him. But he had no time to look back now for the head of the deadly serpent showed up again, and, this time, he hesitated to fire. He hesitated, first, because in this fading light he would perhaps fail to hit it, and, secondly, because if missed and this being the last bullet he would be left with no protection.

While the ranger thus stood undecided, his Tiprai assistant who saw the snake well before his superior, cut into the cover of the forest right away. Detouring widely he crossed the nullah and creeping from one bush to another as silently as a wild cat with his tribal 'daao' (a very sharp-edged weapon of the Tiprais) ready for instant use. He approached the hamadryad. A very drastic manoeuvre indeed, and, perhaps can only be conceived and accomplished by such tribals. However, the ranger, on the other hand, could not move his lips or limbs when he saw the Tiprai inching his way towards this deadly serpent from its back and stalked it so close at one point that a miss or a little mistake would have meant inevitable and agonising death for his assistant. But, fortunately for him, everything went well when he stood up, and, in the flickering of an eye, threw the weapon with utmost strength and accuracy which caught the snake a little below the expanded hood and slashed it clean.

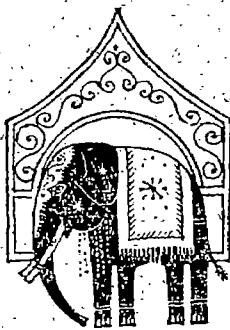
That was how the end came to that strangely behaving and enormous fourteen-feet-seven-inch long hamadryad in the forest of Chittagong Hill

Tracts. But when that night they were giving a graphic account of their near-fatal encounter with the snake to a big crowd, gathered in their office compound, they could not tell what had happened to the elephant. Because little did they know that this male elephant was wandering madly in mortal pain and thirst some twenty miles away at that moment. His agonized trumpeting was heard again several hours later; and, subsequently, for two days his pathetic calls rang through the jungle ceaselessly. During this period, once he passed very near to a charitable dispensary and was seen by all the people awaiting their turn to see the doctor, and, on another, the inmates of some huts of a small village passed several sleepless hours in the night as this animal stood very near to their homesteads and moaned in pain for a long time. On the third day, as was found out later, he headed for the river. Perhaps he wanted to plunge into its cool stream or, may be, before he died, he longed to quench his huge thirst. But, unfortunately, the poor elephant became so incapacitated by the full dose of venom of the cobra that, on the third day, he could no longer call or groan as he had been doing for the last two days. He moved now very slowly and in silence. He swayed from side to side in a state of swoon and fell over several times on the way. But when he sank on his knees for the last time and could not regain his standing posture any more, he dragged his bulk for a short distance and, then, became still for ever. All along in his most pathetic efforts to creep forward he was heading in only one direction: the river.

He died a short distance from the water course near the Dhumghat station.



PRADIP SEN



FESTIVE DAYS ARE DRAWING NEAR

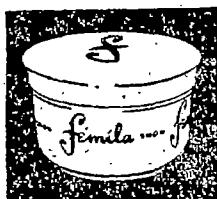
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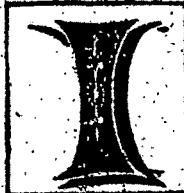


BOROLINE
HOUSE,
CALCUTTA-3.



HARNESSING BACTERIA FOR HUMAN BENEFIT

By ZULFIKAR



If a drop of water from a stagnant pool is viewed through a powerful microscope, one would shudder to see the swarming horde of minute organism or bacteria of diverse forms floating in it. Around us, there are such innumerable tiny organisms or microbes, flourishing in rotten things, plants and petrified animal bodies and on surfaces of every conceivable matter, exposed to damp and dirt. In comparison to the number of human beings in the world, their number is staggeringly high. These microbes are of vegetable or animal species of the lowest form of life. Some of these are visible through the microscope, only when they are magnified thousands of times. For proper micro-biological study, the recently invented ultra or electronic microscope has proved immensely helpful. These micro-organisms have three distinct shapes; the spherical or the ball-like ones are known as cocci, the cylindrical or rod-like varieties are called bacilli, while those which have helical or corkscrew-like forms are the spirilla. The cocci which cluster together like a bunch of grapes are the staphylococci and those that appear as strands are streptococci. Some of the bacteria have hair-like flagella which help them to move and swim. The initial function of bacteria is to decompose matter, whether organic or inorganic. They live on diverse diets and can produce useful products, letting off energy during the process of decomposition.

BEHAVIOUR OF BACTERIA

Bacteria can survive varied and unusual conditions. Some can endure intense heat, while others can live in freezing cold. Some of these bacteria have been found even in an atomic reactor, unaffected by its radiation, a $1/2000$ th fraction of which is sufficient to kill a man. The types of bacteria vary with climatic conditions and matter they readily feed upon to grow.

Bacteria exist in other planets also, most of which are quite strange to our earth. In under-water regions bacteria have been found, as well as

on mountain tops. They can live in strong corrosive acids and also in deadly poisons. Insecticides or other poisonous chemicals, used for killing some bacteria, are the main food of some other variety. Some of them can be trained to flourish even on a diet of pure cyanide.

Bacteria multiply when they divide or split themselves. Their rate of growth and multiplication vary with their species; in a single hour 100 bacteria may become 1600 in some cases. Sugar and molasses turn into alcohol by fermentation, a process depending upon the multiplication of a particular vegetable microbe called yeast, which is highly rich in vitamin. Likewise, fermentation caused by lactic bacteria turns milk into curd. Bacteria destroy sewage. Without them sewage disposal plants would be overflowing and rivers would become highly polluted.

HOW BACTERIA HELP MEN

There is a popular notion that all bacteria are harmful and cause diseases, mostly of a malignant type, and many are in constant dread of them and have a great aversion toward these infinitely tiny yet powerful enemies.

It is indeed true that a variety of diseases, from tuberculosis to bubonic plague, including dysentery, scarlet fever, pneumonia, syphilis etc., as also some strange and undiagnosed maladies, are caused by bacteria. Yet, quite a large number of harmless bacteria are there, and even there are many that are positively helpful to us.

Men should be indebted for some of their foods and drinks, such as cheese, curd, pickles, sauerkraut (German dish of preserved cabbage), vinegar, beer, wine etc., to the unseen active microbes. Cocoa, tobacco, leather, nylon and many acids also need bacterial processing. To get beans out of coffee berries, they require fermentation.

The harmless and helpful bacteria greatly outnumber the hostile ones. In society one man out of every 1700 may very well be mischievous. A recent bacterial survey in America shows that only one

out of 30000 bacteria is malignant or injurious. Dr. Otto Rahn, a former Professor of Bacteriology at Cornell University, sometime in 1941 counted 10 trillion (or 10²⁶) innocuous bacteria as against only 308 thousand trillion (308×10^{15}) harmful ones.

Uses of bacteria are still mostly restricted to agriculture and waste disposal and in both fields their efficiency has been raised by new adaptations. To fight pests and destroy weeds, bacterial spores are sprayed in fields, while bacteria are added to seeds to get a better yield of crop.

By bacterial action offensive sewage is turned into odourless sludge—a grey butter-like stuff, which is now extensively used as manure.

Most bacteria can eat matter atleast twice their own weight in an hour. Yet, there are some that can consume a thousand times their own weight and they can verily be trained to eat waste products of ores or petroleum to purify the products.

Some three years back (1966), two British oil scientists—Dr. Norris and Dr. Ribbon—succeeded in converting methane (marsh gas), a prime constituent of natural gas, into edible protein, with the aid of bacteria feeding exclusively on methane. They got a white flaky, tasteless substance, containing as much as 40 per cent to 50 per cent protein by bacterial treatment of methane. Studies of rock-loving (feeding on rock) bacteria show that ores can be mined with the help of an appropriate kind of bacteria and oil gas and tar can also be produced by the agency of cultivated bacteria.

Some special types of bacteria are cultivated only for waste products. The U.S. Bureau of Mines have found sulphur bacteria or thiobacilli, which devouring sulphur in ore-waste, produce sulphuric acid. Manufacture of sulphuric acid is expensive, for it needs heavy investment in equipment. But mine-owners are in a position to compete economically in the field of its production with the manufacturers who follow the costly lead-chamber process or Badische Process, by using the Bureau's method of causing thiobacillus thioxidans to

flourish in a bed of sulphur under regulated temperature.

The process of extraction of metals from their ores falls within the purview of hydrometallurgy, by which metals are obtained from their aqueous slurry. Scientists like Addison, Buyner and Duncan have been able to get metals out of their sulphide by bacterial treatment.

Some bacteria reproduce at a very quick rate and therefore serve as very useful tools for the geneticists. Some of the bacteria like yeast supply vitamin to the system of our bodies and such bacteria are now taken in as vitamin pills and some are also injected in the form of vaccines.

FUTURE POTENTIALITIES

Scientists have found that microbes can play an important role in generating electric power. They can be used in cells like car batteries, for energising submarine and spacecrafts. Researches on fuel cells for interstellar space energy and electric studies for harnessing plants to supply power to big cities hold great expectation for the coming generations.

Bacteria are likely to solve the future food crisis of the growing populations of the world. Yeast and some particular species of bacteria form a tolerably good substitute for meat and dairy products.

University scholars, Government technicians and scientific experts attached to industrial concerns, carrying on investigations to explore new ways of utilising the microbes for scientific and commercial purposes are being supplied with bacterial specimens by such organisations as grow and preserve bacteria solely for scientific and industrial uses. One such organisation is American Type Culture Collection in Washington, D.C., which distributes more than 12,000 cultures each year.

Faturity is yet to witness the fulfilment of some great industrial ventures, in which these microscopic organisms would be made to yield far greater benefit for mankind.





Killing to Save

By NITYANANDA MAHAPATRA

D

OCTOR babu! Doctor babu! Curly hills rise in Kala-handhi, high above the soils, splitting their breasts, like streams of milk, swift flows the river by the ghats. But today it burns fiercely beneath the blazing sun. The hills have turned into rock, like the gods of Kaliyug turned to stone on hearing the sound of Kalapahad's drum made of a pregnant cow's hide.

Doctor babu does not listen. He's fast asleep. Who calls at such an hour?

"Doctor babu! Doctor babu, sir!"

From whence come pot-black clouds bursting ear-drums throughout the country with their cry, "Gold will grow in this soil! Gold will grow!" washing away the sharp agony, the searing heat from summer's burning breast. Not a blade of grass sprouts from that soil today,—not to mention food!

"Sir, listen for once, sir!"

Again and again rang that call. It must be some patient. But he was not a man of medicine—he was a man of pleasure. Without accepting the

responsibilities of parenthood let men enjoy women as often as they desired, and let women enjoy men—to arrange for this was the purpose of his creation.

"Who's that? Who's that bastard howling? Go!—Go away!—This is not the hospital. Go there!"

"Hazaar, there is need. 'Mahaprabhu', take pity on me!"

A human society afraid of the sight of human beings, fearing the human foetus too, has chosen the cowardly task of sacrificing the incipient soul even before the foetus forms. Of that society, Doctor babu was the foremost servant, the highest representative—the family planning doctor.

"What is it, you bastard? What do you want?"
"I want an 'opreshun'."

"Spunk", you've come to be castrated! You're just a boy, you bastard, why do you want to be castrated? All right. Be off now, and back by four.

"Don't come here.—Go to the office,—over there."

"No, sir, I need it now. I will go to work. How else can I live?"

"Well, you should not go to work just after the operation.—Now go away! Such haste, for castration of all things!"

The doctor had opened the door a little to look at the man, and was about to close it again: The man fell with a thud across the threshold, and clung to the doctor's legs.

"Take pity on me! Take pity 'Mahaprabhu', otherwise my father will die. My father will die, 'Mahaprabhu'!"

This time the doctor opened the door wide and took a good look at the man. With his own hands he lifted him up from the floor.

The eyes were sunk in the sockets. Jawbones stuck out. The ribs could be counted. Belly and back were one. Bones seemed to burst out of the skin.

The doctor was surprised. This man had come to be castrated! Otherwise his father would die?

A fearsome vision of the famine danced before the doctor's eyes. This was no drought of grain—human drought had come to pass.

Take care! Take care! Man take care of man! "What's wrong with your father?" the doctor asked solicitously, his voice getting gentle with sympathy.

"Taken no food, sir. No food for his stomach for one and a half months. He made me eat everything both of us brought in. Despite my begging he himself did not eat anything."

"Well, take—take this and feed your father", said the doctor pulling a rupee-note from his waist, and flinging it near him.

"What's the use of one rupee, sir? Please do the 'opreshun'. Then I can get hold of some cash at least. We could survive on that for a month or so."

"All right, come on" said the doctor and led him to the family planning centre which was close to the hospital. He took out the register and asked, "Your name, boy?"

"My name's Jeevdhan Nayak."
"Father's?"

"Father's name is Bharat Nayak."
"How many children have you?"
"Five kids, sir. Two girls and three boys, sir."
"Well, then, come along."

The doctor performed the vasectomy. Jeevdhan kept trembling. Pale-faced. What had he done? He had told an untruth?

But his face brightened when the doctor handed him two notes. Slowly he got up from the operation table. The doctor told him he must stay in the hospital for three days. Stay in the hospital?

"No, sir! Nothing will happen to me!"

He started for home with astounding courage and enthusiasm. On the way he went from shop to shop for a handful of rice. Everywhere they refused.

A kilo of rice cost two rupees. Even then it was not available. At one place there was 250 grammes of flattened rice. Jeevdhan bought it for two rupees. His heart overflowed with joy. His father would be saved. From somewhere strength came to his legs.

"Oh Father!—Father, Father!—I've brought flattened rice!"

"Flattened rice?" the old man looked up. The

dim eyes of the dying man lighted up. "Have you eaten?" he asked..

"Yes," lied Jeevdhan.

"From where did you get it?" asked the old man.

Jeevdhan was silent. The old man was insistent. Jeevdhan was without answer. He went to soak the flattened rice in water. But where was water? Water too, had dried up from Kalahandi's soil. There was a little in a spouted pitcher. He washed it in that and took it to his father.

Once again the old man asked, "Tell me, tell me who gave it to you? From where did you get it? There are human beings in this world?"

Jeevdhan could no longer hide the truth. As his father placed a ball of flattened rice in his mouth, he spoke, "Father, dear, I had an 'opreshun'?"

"Opreshun, what 'opreshun'?"

"With this 'opreshun' I'll have no children."

"Oh! Oh! My son, what have you done! You've destroyed my line!" suddenly the old man became still. The ball of flattened rice remained stuck in his mouth.

The old man had made arrangements for Jeevdhan's marriage in the rainy season.

(Translated by Padmalaya Das).



THE STONE AGE CULTURE OF NORTH CACHAR

By AMIT KUMAR NAG



AS the Barail range in North Cachar the cradle of civilization in North - East India? This question has assumed great significance in recent years following a series of discoveries.

Of course, there cannot be any denying of the fact that the ruins of Ambari in Gauhati

have raised hopes of locating the flourishing ancient business centre which served as the most important Indian mart on the Sino-Roman trade route via India. But this is a part of history.

Besides, some Garo Hill areas in and around the Tura and Arbela ranges can now boast Palaeolithic (Early Stone Age) relics, dating back nearly 15,000 years.

But the importance of the Neolithic relics of the North Cachar Hills is undoubtedly of greater significance.

Because the tradition of a "vanished race" survived in the N. C. Hills. But their nature and identity remained enigmatic.

Thirty years ago Mrs. Ursula Graham Bower found—"All through the Barail area, tucked away behind ridges, on precipitous spurs, at the heads of hidden ravines, were the lost villages of a vanished people. The Zemi (Naga) said they were the relics of the jungle-folk, the Siemi, who had preceded them in the occupation of the country. Tradition had it that the Kacharis had wiped them out.

"Small settlements, recognizable by their house-platforms, which sometimes stone-faced and cropped out on otherwise smooth hillsides, were legion." But some of the larger sites were of more interest."

Numerous stone-slabs and other relics left behind by these people—who did not know cultivation—still stand as testimony to their existence.

Moreover, the North Cachar Hills is comparatively older than most other hill areas of Assam geologically.

So the potentialities of this area as a cradle of human civilization seem greater. By "human civilization" I do not mean any great civilizations of the past—but I want to refer to the rudimentary beginnings of civilization.

Apart from the "vanished people" of the past, some other group or groups of people actually lived in this area earlier. This fact is now known following certain discoveries and expeditions. While the "vanished people" did not know agricultural practices, the earlier inhabitants were Neolithic agricultural communities.

That in the Stone Age the North Cachar Hills were inhabited by a population group is clearly borne out by ruins and remains excavated there.

Writing about the "shouldered celts" found in India, Burma, Indonesia and Indo-China, Dr. J. H. Hutton stated in the Census Report of India 1931: "One rather curious feature is the sporadic appearance of the true shouldered adze of the Irrawaddy type in India, accompanied by a very common prevalence of a roughly shouldered type probably almost equally effective for practical purposes but obviously involving far less labour in the making. * * * * The roughly shouldered adze common in the Naga Hills and the Santal Parganas is polished only on the plano-convex cutting edge, the tag end being left rough, and a shoulder roughly worked sometimes on one side of the adze only. In the North Cachar Hills, in an area occupied by a number of prehistoric groups of enormous monolithic urns of phallic shape, which contained the ashes of the dead and are probably forerunners of the Khasi stone cists and clan burials, a number of stone axes and adzes have been found."

The recent Gauhati University expedition to

Daojali Hading in the North Cachar Hills revealed and confirmed the existence of the New Stone Age culture. The occurrence of "shouldered celts" links this culture with the Neolithic culture of the Southeast Asia.

Besides, the stone tools found there were discovered to have been fashioned out of a particular type of stone not available in the locality or its neighbourhood. This fact proves that an organized mining of the stones were carried out by them.

The large number of stone sharpening bones found in the excavation indicates that the stone tools were made at the site. These stone tools led to interesting discoveries. Anthropologists are of the opinion that the Neolithic agricultural communities used these tools as hoe-blades. Even now the implements used for weeding—in shifting 'jhum' cultivation of the slash-and-burn method—is a crude hoe of iron.

This functional analysis of the stone tool indicates further that the Neolithic people of the North Cachar Hills practised cultivation—probably of rice and millet, some wild species of which are still found in the area.

Some other implements—grinding stones, millers and pestles—excavated there further strengthen the hypothesis about the agricultural practices of these people.

Another important discovery is a type of crude pottery. No whole pot was, however, found. The broken shards found probably represent the original neolithic art of making pottery. It is pertinent to mention here that the present inhabitants of the locality have no idea of making earthen pots—they use bamboo tubes as containers.

The present inhabitants of the North Cachar Hills have nothing to do with the vanished people of the past. Its composition according to the 1961 census was: Dimachha (Hill Kacharia)—24,000; Zemi and other Naga tribes—9,000; Hmar—3,000; Kuki—3,000 and Mikir—3,000; besides another 4,000 plains people.

The Dimachhas belong to the Bodo sub-group of the Tibeto-Burman ethnic family. Their tribal name means "the children of the great river".

According to some historians, the Bodos originally inhabited the country north of the Himalayas and west of China.

DIMACHHAS

Amongst all the Bodo tribes the Dimachhas of the North Cachar Hills appear to have kept many of their original customs and practices in a more or less pure form. They have even retained their tribal organization. In the past the tribal organization used to be autocratic but nowadays it is more or less democratic. There is a headman to give the final orders; a minister of land to advise the headman on all matters concerning lands and cattle; head-boy to keep the youngsters in order and a head-girl for girls. None of these is a hereditary office.

The Dimachha marriage price is required to be paid to the parents of the prospective bride. In case the bridegroom and his parents are unable to pay the price demanded by the bride's parents it is usual for the bridegroom to give the equivalent in personal services in the house of the bride's parents. Actual marriage is celebrated with sacrifices and feasts. Their priests or 'Jontai' perform all the religious ceremonies.

Although their present society is patrilineal traces of matriliney still survive along with a substratum of megalithic culture.

Social relations between the sexes are easy and natural, men and women meeting freely on an equal footing. Household chores whether in the field or in the house, are very fairly divided between men and women. The married women are far from being mere household drudges—they have clearly defined positions and inside the house they are supreme.

They practise both 'jhum' and wet cultivation. Their "problem of scarcity does not lie in the shortage of land"—but in lack of orientation.



CRISIS IN CIVILIZATION

K. CHAUDHURI



had all along a faith that a new civilisation will spring out of the heart of Europe. But, to-day when I am about to quit this world, that faith has gone bankrupt altogether. As I look around, I find the crumbling ruins of a proud civilisation strewn like a vast heap of futility.

"Yet I shall not commit the grievous sin of losing faith in man. I would rather look forward to the opening of a new chapter when this cataclysm is over and the sky rendered clear by a spirit of service and sacrifice. Perhaps that dawn would come from this horizon, from the East where the sun rises. The unvanquished man will then retrace his steps to retrieve his lost human heritage"—these are the memorable words with which the sage of Santiniketan concluded his famous last testament issued almost from his deathbed.

That was in 1941. More than a quarter of a century has since elapsed. But, alas, that dawn has not yet come! Man is still groping in the darkness. The occasional flashes of light to which he has turned from time to time with the fond hope that they will illumine his path have proved to be merely will-o'-the-wisps!

True, man has already landed on the moon. He has planted a number of symbols of his scientific feat on the breast of the enigmatic Venus at a fantastic distance of 40 million klm's. He is transplanting human hearts, converting dreary deserts into flowering gardens. He has many other awe-inspiring and spellbinding scientific and technological wonders to his credit. But, what about the intrinsic man? Has he overcome his deformities and distortions? The ingrained stupidities and bestial susceptibilities? The contradiction between his intellectual advance and emotional immobility? The answer is tragically in the negative.

Human dignity is still trampled upon. The emancipation of women is still a far cry. Communalism, racism, national chauvinism, dogmatism and fanaticism—the 'civilised' continue to hold their undiminished sway. Short-sightedness and downright opportunism are paraded as 'pragmatism' and 'practical politics'. Immediate gains cloud the vision that their inevitable consequences are fatal. Man kills man on the slightest provocation. Repressive measures and military interventions have never solved any real human problem. Yet such actions

are regarded as midwives of history. In short, there is no sign that man has started retracing his steps. Consequently, one cannot help wondering: Man, Quo Vadis?

Spiritualists are prone to lay the blame at the door of science and technology. In their opinion, science has by and large failed to ensure the progress of civilisation. Instead, it is only ministering to the endless physical requirements of man. And, in the process, science is aggravating evils. It is handing over to man newer and newer weapons of exploitation and destruction. Instead of being the kindly light in the temple of divinity, it has, for all practical purposes, become hell-fire in the dark chamber of the devil.

Spiritualists would also appear to suggest that it is no use whetting man's desires which have no limit. They seem to claim that although enough damage has already been done, salvation can still be achieved if only man's attention is firmly drawn towards spiritual pursuits and self-sacrifice. Which means that man must put a curb on his material requirements and, at the same time, learn the virtues of slowly abjuring carnal pleasures with a view to discovering his true self, i.e., identification with the divinity.

The difficulty, however, is that the consciousness that can sustain a true spirit of self-abnegation arises only at a certain variable stage of satisfaction—not before that. Even Gandhiji had to declare that 'God does not dare appear before the hungry except in the form of food'. Swami Vivekananda, too, has expressed almost the same sentiment by calling upon man to serve the downtrodden instead of searching a religious road to heaven.

The obvious conclusion is that the fulfilment of material needs to a degree is not detrimental but conducive to the flowering of spiritualism provided the consciousness is generated at the right moment.

CRAZE FOR LIVING STANDARDS

The argument may be advanced that material well-being must not be ignored. But what is decried is the encouragement to a craze for ever higher living standards. Such a mad race for higher living standards is surely a corrosive evil. But the snag is: who is to draw the line and how? Where is the universally applicable standard?

Since there is no satisfactory answer, material progress cannot be halted. Nor is it desirable, particularly because the vast majority of the world's

population are still carrying on their existence as sub-human species. So material progress is unavoidable and, for this purpose, the progress of science is also a sine qua non.

Now, the materialists would seem to have scored the point. But, what is the use? They may have an edge over the spiritualists. They may go ahead with their science and technology in the belief that they will be able to wipe out every tear from every eye, do away with class-conflicts and all disparities among regions and nations. It is also incontrovertible that they have conquered many 'impossible', that they have crushed the barrier between imagination and reality at least in scientific progress. They may also claim that they are poised for an adventure of unimaginable potentialities—the Odyssey in endless outer space. The thrill of this latest adventure, they may believe, will by one single stroke, raise man's stature to a superhuman height. The day is therefore not remote, they may assert, when all the evils that have been haunting man from the dawn of history will be buried for ever.

But, if past experience is any guide, all these assertions will fail to allay the fear that we are merely chasing a mirage! Who can forget that the splitting of the atom has not realised the dream of great scientists but has, on the contrary, unleashed 'an evil incarnate' the monstrosity of which has led its creators to heart-rending self-condemnation? In the past, at every phase of such miraculous discoveries or inventions, man's earlier hopes for peace and progress had been dashed to the ground. The same forces which led to such disappointments continue to operate still to-day. Science and technology, the modern Aladin's Lamp, may place at our disposal all the material prosperity and physical comforts that we may possibly dream of; but, as already discussed, such comforts cannot remedy the serious malady from which man has been suffering.

One is therefore driven to the inevitable question: then, what is to be done?

We started with Tagore. Let us again turn to him to see if he has furnished any answer. The most remarkable and original contribution made by Tagore, as a social thinker and worker, to a nation in ferment and a world in tumult, is his twin experiments embodied by Sriniketan and Santiniketan.

SRINIKETAN

Sriniketan is a model for organising a new, balanced and self-governing social order based on co-operative economic principles. (Readers may recall the radio broadcast on the occasion of Tagore's Birthday Centenary made by the then Dy. Governor of R.B.I. in which he said with reference to Sriniketan that "the Poet was fifty years ahead of us"). A rural reconstruction scheme, planned and implemented as far as practicable with the limited resources at the poet's command, in an enslaved country, the Sriniketan experiment symbolises Tagore's efforts towards the economic advancement of deprived multitudes. He was not the mystic saint to denounce the ever-rising living standards of mankind and its indispensable vehicle—science and technology. He has clearly said, "Liberation through renunciation is not for me." The name—Sriniketan (Abode of Wealth)—itself indicates that the experiment was meant for production and appropriation of wealth on an equitable basis to meet the ends of social justice. He was, however, conscious that no socio-economic experiment for ushering in a self-regulating social order, inspired by humanistic ideals, could reach its envisaged consummation

without a simultaneous drive for converting fragmented, distorted and self-oblivious man into integral man, or, self-realised man. For, it is a truism that in all worldly enterprises, the human factor is the most decisive of all. All laws, systems and disciplines are made and unmade by man.

It is for creating the 'integral man', the 'whole man' that the poet embarked upon his Santiniketan experiment. Santiniketan was not at all a whim or flight of fancy on the part of the poet as many people aver. Tagore clearly realised that his scheme for creating 'integral man' could be put through only by means of an educational system that would be basically different from what had been borrowed from the West. The Western system, still in vogue, has reduced education into a commodity. Academic and training institutions are no better than establishments meant for mass-scale production of degree and diploma-holders. The relationship between the teacher and the taught is virtually that of the seller and the buyer. Students, the budding flowers of humanity, are kept confined within the narrow bounds of four walls and are mercilessly punished by hurling at them brickbats of stereotyped lessons divorced from realities and irrespective of individual urges and aspirations.

The result is that we get a large-scale supply of degree and diploma-holders to be engaged in various occupations and professing. They sell their physical and mental labours with the sole purpose of earning money to meet their physical needs. Sankaracharya truly assessed that "man cannot be distinguished from an animal" (*Pashchadavi Avisheshat*)! No doubt, there are honourable exceptions. But such exceptions only corroborate the truth.

EDUCATION IN WEST

There cannot, therefore, be any gainsaying the fact that the Western system of education is, in the final analysis, useless for the continuous progress of civilisation. Frequent turmoils in the so-called progressive societies pursuing all sorts of 'isms' would support the contention eloquently. In contrast, Santiniketan's system bring students into the open—in the midst of nature—so that they can get acquainted with the infinite mysteries and beauties of nature in their formative stages of body and mind. The treasure house of beauty in music and songs, dance and dramas, literature and the fine arts is kept wide open to facilitate learning through recreation and exaltation. Although all subjects of humanities and science are taught, emphasis on aesthetics is the hallmark of Santiniketan. The teacher and the taught live on the same campus as though in a family. They share the same mode of life, same joys and sorrows and, in the process, develop a sort of kindred spirit that finds satisfaction in giving and taking the very best in each without inhibition. Discipline is not imposed but generated by rousing a spirit of lofty mission.

The creative urge roused and increasingly invigorated in a young mind inspires him and constantly fills him with a delightful pain to create something original, whatever the field of his mundane activity may be in future. The sublime bliss (*Anandam*) derived from his original creation gradually leads him to realise the truth of the motto that Tagore set for himself and his disciples, namely, *Yenaham Namritasyan Kimaham Tena Kuriyam* (What shall I do with that which cannot give me the taste of Amritam)?

We have already explained that when a man remains engaged in fulfilling his physical needs and

comforts he is not above an animal. But when the truth of the motto just mentioned dawns upon a man, when his thirst for *Amritam* subordinates his all other desires he becomes the 'whole man' for he no longer remains fragmented in his duality as human being and animal. He attains self-realisation (i.e., *Aham Brahmasmi*—I am the Creator). And, once awokened to this glorious discovery of his true self, he refuses to worship at the altar of any supernatural Power or Superman or Super "ism"—the advocates of which have so far exploited him to perpetuate the crisis in civilisation.

TRANSIORY TRUTHS

But, what is the 'rational kernel' within the mystic shell', as Karl Marx has put it? Man has churned the ocean of knowledge with the help of his vast accumulation of experiences. He has then come to the conclusion that physical prowess, material wealth, theories on different subjects, philosophies and ideologies, all come and go. They all represent transitory truths. (Tagore has expressed this idea in his inimitable style in the first stanza of his celebrated poem 'Shahjehan'). In consequence, they cannot keep man permanently absorbed and satisfied. Discontent and dissatisfaction grow inevitably giving rise to conflicts and destructive forces. He has finally discovered that the only condition that can fill man with satisfaction is his absorption in creativity and the concomitant ecstasy (Anandam). This creativity ultimately leads him to the realisation that beauty is the only transcendental truth. Attainment of this ultimate truth is the Amritam which has made all the difference between Gods and devils (Daityas).

Gods and Devils, as we find in Hindu mythology, are equal in wealth, physical prowess, arms as well as skill in their use. But, while gods do not surrender to their lure and crave for something superior, devils remain enamoured of them and their further acquisition. The reason is that gods are creators—they can grant boons, i.e., they can create something original. Consequently, their thirst for Amritam immunises them from the spell of other attractions. But devils, not endowed with that gift, are also unaware of Amritam. They re-

main mere mortals and they perish. It should perhaps be clear by now that what Hindu mythology has symbolically described as Amritam is consciousness of the ultimate truth.

A reference to some ideal characters, imaginary and real, would also bring into sharp relief what a difference the attainment of the ultimate truth can make. Shiva (Nataraj or Supreme Dancer), Krishna (flute player), Arjuna (a master in music and dancing and dramatic art), Einstein, J. C. Bose, Swami Vivekananda, Shri Aurobindo, Bertrand Russell, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sarojini Naidu, among others, flash into our mind instantly. They are not only original creators in their own fields, but also creators and votaries of beauty.

CREATIVE JOY

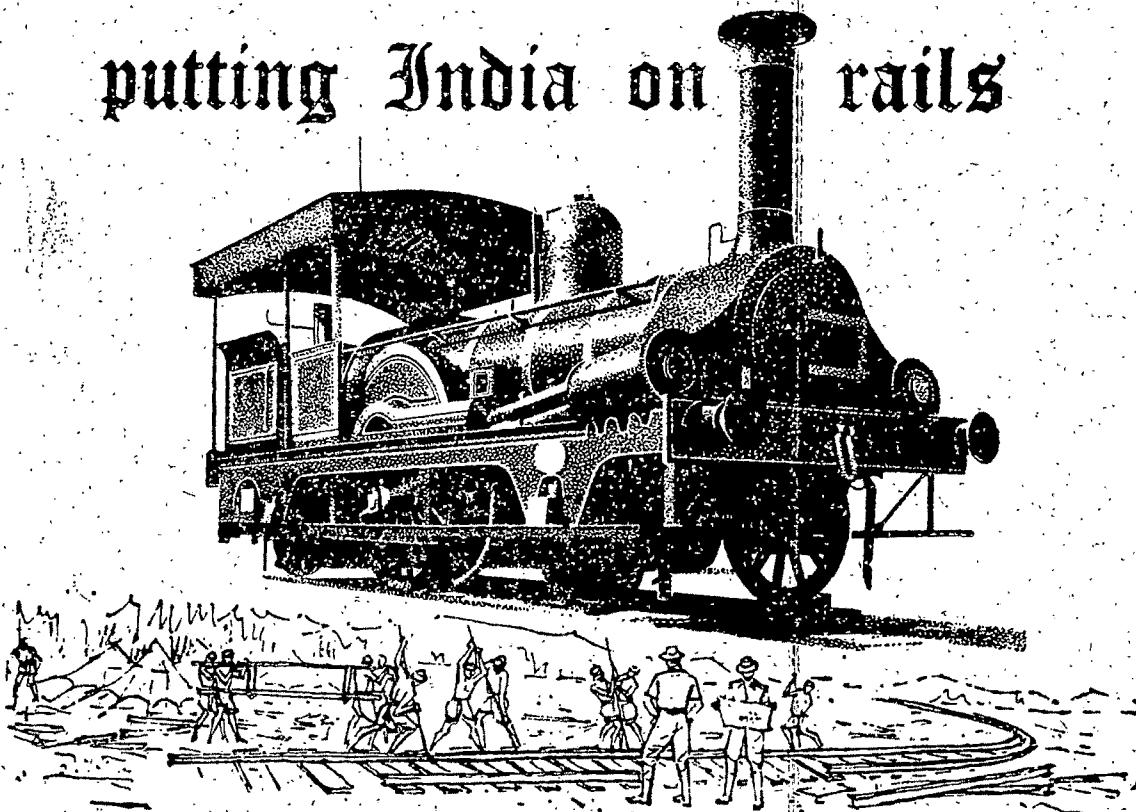
That ultimate liberation of man lies in creative joy has been emphasised not only by Tagore but also by two other great modern humanists. They are Shri Aurobindo and Karl Marx—one belonging to the spiritualist school and the other materialist. Shri Aurobindo has held that man will have to pass through the stages of "super-mind" and "supramental" to reach his ultimate goal, *Anandam*. Karl Marx too has visualised a classless society in which everybody works according to his ability and gets according to his needs. In his opinion, such a social condition will enable the 'alienated man' to have enough time for introspection and to restore himself to his true self, i.e., that he is a creator of joy and beauty.

Tagore has tried to make a synthesis between the materialist and spiritualist philosophies by laying appropriate emphasis on material progress and simultaneous creation of the 'whole man' through his twin experiments symbolised by Sriniketan and Santiniketan. No other humanist has, perhaps, tried such a synthesis.

It is now for thinkers, scholars and educationists to ponder over what Tagore has bequeathed, what we have done with that unique heritage. And they may also ponder whether it continues to be worth our while to revive the experiments in their original spirit with necessary modifications to suit the changed circumstances in the context of industrial advance.



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SISTER

NIVEDITA

BY SISIR GHOSH



HE Nivedita story, a romance of the Indian Renaissance and the Meeting of the East and the West, has all the pathos and passion of tragedy. When she met the Swami in England (1895) Miss Margaret Noble was only twenty-eight, Vivekananda a few years older.

This is how she described the fateful meeting: "Even in faraway London the first time I saw him the occasion must have stirred in his mind as it does in mine, recalling it now, a host of association. . . . The time was a cold Sunday afternoon in November, and the place, it is true, a West-end drawing room. . . . We were but fifteen or sixteen guests, intimate friends many of us, and he sat amongst us, in his crimson robe and girdle, as one bringing news from a far land, with a curious habit of saying now and again 'Siva! Sivà!' and wearing that look of gentleness and loftiness that one sees on the face of those who live much in meditation, that look, perhaps, that Raphael had painted for us on the brow of the Sistine Child. That afternoon is now ten years ago, and fragments only of the talk come back to me. But never to be forgotten are the Sanskrit verses that he chanted for us, in those wonderful Eastern tones at once so reminiscent of, and yet so different from, the Gregorian music of our own churches."

"The recognition was mutual. Quite early Vivekananda had described her as the "fairest flower of my work in England". In reality, on Miss Noble's part, it was more than devotion that stirred her heart and soul. She made no secret of her feelings.

As Romain Rolland has pointed out, the future will always unite her name of initiation, Sister Nivedita, to that of her beloved Master as St. Clara to that of St. Francis.

Vivekananda left England towards the end of 1896 and moving through Switzerland, Italy, reached India in early 1897. Margaret Noble came the year after. On the eve of her departure, Viveka-

nanda had sent her a memorable pledge: "I will stand by you unto death, whether you work for India or not, whether you give up Vedanta or remain in it. 'The tusks of the elephant come out, but they never go back.' Even so are the words of a man." And he kept his word.

The proceedings were in every way unusual. The Swami held strong views on how the western disciple should live and learn: "You have to set yourself to Hinduse your thoughts, your needs, your conceptions and your habits. Your life has to become all that an orthodox Brahmin Brahmacarin's ought to be. The method will come to you if you desire it sufficiently. But you have to forget your own past and to cause it to be forgotten. You have to lose even its memory." It was indeed a strict regimen.

Was her initiation, on the day of the Feast of Annunciation, into an Eastern monastic order, part of the programme? Henceforth she would be known as Nivedita, the Dedicated or the Consecrated One. The rituals were original, if not odd, wholly *a la* Vivekananda, as can be seen from Nivedita's own record in which, appropriately, she refrains from using the first person singular.

"May one of them never forget a certain day of consecration, in the chapel at the monastery, when, as the opening step in a lifetime, so to speak, he first taught her to perform the worship of Shiva and then made the whole culminate in an offering of flowers at the feet of the Buddha! 'Go thou,' he said, as if addressing in one person each separate soul that would ever come to him for guidance, 'and follow Him who was born and gave his life others FIVE HUNDRED TIMES, before he attained to the vision of the Buddha.'

A new chapter in her life—Sarada Devi's 'Khuki'—was beginning. The training of his western disciple engaged the serious attention of Swami Vivekananda who was not unaware of the great risks he had taken and which could not have gone without criticism even within the fold. He was perhaps most severe with Nivedita just as he expected

most out of her. One day Nivedita had asked him: "How best can I serve you?" Pat came the reply: Love India.

Long and detailed tutoring followed, till the ideals of Indian life and culture sank deep into the disciple's mind. The period of training was of the utmost importance and would bear fruit in later years, in her writings and speeches, her work for the Indian people, for the Indian Renaissance and last but not least, political or revolutionary activity.

Another part of the training was on fairly conventional lines—following the pilgrim route. It was an altogether new experience and counted for much in the slow transformation that took place within the impressionable Sister. Her Indianising was almost complete, almost because in spite of all schooling the Sister was, after all, and always, herself. She would obey the Master but none else. But we anticipate.

The Swami had specially assigned to Sister Nivedita the education of Indian girls. On November 12, 1898, on the Kali Puja day, was opened, with due ceremony, a small school—Nivedita Girls' School—in 17, Bosepara Lane, Bagbazar, Calcutta. Sarada Devi, Swami Vivekananda and other monks attended the function, at the end of which Sarada Devi invoked the blessings of the Great Mother of the Universe so that the girls might grow into ideal womanhood.

The school had a small but enthusiastic start. Nivedita was ably assisted by Sister Christine, an American disciple, and Sudhira, who had her education in the Brahmo Girls' School. The House of the Sisters was known throughout the neighbourhood and, soon after, far beyond, for different reasons. Next year, after eight months of grinding labour, Nivedita went back to England to collect funds for the school. The Swami too had gone away to California but continued to encourage her from there. "Money will come for your school never fear—it has got to come!" Back home, one day the Swami came unannounced to visit the little school and liked it. "Come to Belur Math tomorrow morning," he said, "I should like you to explain your plan of work to the entire college of monks." Honour indeed!

About a week later Nivedita felt an inexplicable urge to visit the Swami at the monastery. It was a day of feasting and prayer and when she arrived she was not expected. But Vivekananda, grave and playful, took it in sporting spirit. In fact, he insisted on serving her. The meal over he helped her wash her hand in water perfumed with mint. Non-plussed, Nivedita could only say: Master, it is me who should be in your place, and you in mine. Jesus washed the feet of His disciples, was the Swami's enigmatic answer. But that was the last time, the ominous words were on. Nivedita's lips but remained unuttered. After a time she came back to Bagbazar not knowing that she would never see him alive again.

The Swami had been in poor health for some time. To those who were near him at the time he had confided: "A great tapasya (austerity) and meditation has come upon me and I am making ready for death." But few could imagine that the end was so near. The end came suddenly. Nivedita was not present at the time. The next morning a special messenger arrived at her Bagbazar residence. With a brief note: "The end came yesterday. Swamiji fell asleep at 9 o'clock in the night." She at once left for Belur where a large crowd had already collected. As the body burnt away on the Ganges bank, Nivedita, sitting lonely under a tree a little way off, prayed: "O Master, may I act

according to your wish. The monks adore, I have not the time. He has entrusted me with a mission. I must work!" Yes, more work than she had ever undertaken before.

But, first now that her protector was gone, came the expected breach with the Mission authorities. Nivedita had always been interested, more as a participant than as a spectator or sympathiser, in the Indian freedom movement. It was no secret that many of her friends and admirers were revolutionaries. Her own public speeches, and she was in great demand, were inflammatory rather than conciliatory. The Mission authorities tried, in vain, to dissuade her from active participation in politics, reminded her of her vow of obedience. After an inconclusive interview, the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* (July 19, 1902) flashed the following news item:

"SISTER NIVEDITA. We have been requested by the Ramakrishna Mission authorities to inform the public that at the conclusion of the days of mourning for Swami Vivekananda, it has been decided between the members of the Order at Belur Math and Sister Nivedita that her work shall henceforth be regarded as free and entirely independent of their sanction and authority."

The breach was bound to come. At this date one does not know how much to blame the establishment at Belur for the turn of events. Or Sister Nivedita.

She now threw herself more openly in the freedom struggle. But never did she forget Vivekananda, "our great national hero." And "what was the idea that caught Vivekananda? He saw before him a great Indian nationality, young, vigorous, fully the equal of any nationality on the face of the earth." She wanted to start Vivekananda Societies all over the country.

With this in view she travelled a good deal all over the sub-continent, visited Bombay, Poona, Nagpur, Madras, Buddha-Gaya, Lahore, Hyderabad, Baroda. At the last of these places she met Aurobindo Ghose and at once guessed the fire in him. For one thing, both were Kali worshippers. At Nagpur in an open meeting she castigated the mass manufacture of weakling graduates. To make her point clear she added: "The country needs robust and patriotic men instead of persons who serve an alien Government and dominate over their countrymen. They alone can uplift the country."

All the time she was in a dizzy ferment. In the meantime her acquaintances, among the high and low, had multiplied. These included nationalists of all shades, especially the extremists, the artists, the educators, the young. To the young her appeal was magical. One day when they had asked her for a speech—*garam baktita*, highly seasoned speeches have been the Bengali boys' all-time favourite dish—she answered in accents that echoed her master's voice: "Do you know what I have learnt from the Gita? It is the perennial source of strength which you are called upon to imbibe. When will there arise the veritable fighter with the Gita in his one hand and the sword in the other? We can easily follow in the footsteps of our national hero, Swami Vivekananda. . . ." Whether this was orthodox interpretation—the Belur Math would certainly look askance—may be doubted but it carried the day and that is what mattered. She certainly incarnated the spirit of "Aggressive Hinduism" of which the Master had spoken. She was not alone. Among its other noble spokesmen were Bipin Chandra Pal, Brahmanandha Upadhyaya and, for a while, even Rabindranath Tagore.

Nivedita's friends included not only men of religion and politics but also the artists and thinkers, men of letters and science. The poet, Tagore, knew her from her early days in Calcutta and was deeply touched by her faith and passion for the cause of India. Her voluntary work during the Calcutta plague in 1898 had impressed Tagore deeply. One of his major novels, or characters, *Gora*, owes a good deal to her. With the scientist Jagadish Chandra Bose (her 'Bairn') and his family the contacts were deep and complex. She was almost part author of Bose's work on Plant Response. The artist Abanindranath, though hardly to be counted among the religious, was sensitive to her appeal and inspiration and in his memoirs has left us a superb description of that presence:

"What a fine woman she was! I first met her at the residence of the American Consul on the occasion of Akakura's reception there. Clad in a white overflowing robe with a garland of Rudraksha beads around her neck, she seemed to me a statue carved out of white marble. It is impossible to describe her beauty. Next time I met her at Justice Homewood's where a party was being held under the auspices of the Art Society. Nivedita, who had been invited, came long before the party had started. It was a splendid gathering. The elite of the town, the men and the women, had turned out in all their finery. Fashion and splendour vied with each other. Laughter mingled with the music, rose and fell. It was about evening when Nivedita came. It was like a moon amidst the stars. Before the majesty of her beauty, simple and holy, the prettiest of the women present at the party at once faded into insignificance. Drapad in white, with the beads of Rudraksha thrown round her neck, and her grey hairs, golden and grey, Nivedita became the observed of all observers. Every one turned towards her. Low whispers circled round. "Who might this be?" asked Woodroffe Blunt. I introduced her to the leading men of the party. You may talk of beauty, but to me Nivedita appeared to be the ideal beautiful woman; some Mahasweta come alive from the pages of *Kadambari*. Talking to her even for a few moments would inspire a person."

One of the chief spokesmen of Art and Nationalism, it was Nivedita who arranged for Nandalal Bose and Asit Halder to accompany Lady Harrington to copy the frescoes of Ajanta. Her commentary on the paintings of the Bengal School as well as the defence of Indian ideals and art was a considerable factor during the Swadeshi days.

But Nivedita was, above all, a fighter. No wonder she was drawn, instinctively, into the vortex of revolutionary politics which had necessarily to be underground.

Her Irish ancestry perhaps made it easier. Every one of her moves left the British Government guessing and puzzled. The announcement of the Partition of Bengal (July 20, 1905) was followed by protest meetings all over the province. At one of these, in the Town Hall, the crowd was so big that three meetings had to be held instead of one. Nivedita was there all through.

In the process she overworked herself. And when she fell ill she refused to go to the Government hospital or be treated by European doctors. Even when convalescing at Darjeeling she was busy retouching Jagadish Chandra's manuscript on the Response in the Living and Non-Living. From her sickbed she wrote to Gokhale, who was known to support partition, explaining the rationale of the

popular protest and the unwisdom of the Government's decision. In a meeting at Darjeeling, the ailing Nivedita held to her thesis: "We shall continue the struggle until the sacrifice and heroism of the children of India compel the English to remove the insulting barriers which divides Bengal, until they show a respect to us." As before, Nivedita spoke of herself as a Bengali and an Indian.

In the Congress meeting at Banaras (1906) and later at Barisal she was all the time active behind the scene. She would also rush to relief work, be it flood or famine, till too much work, irregular hours, compelled her to withdraw and seek the refuge of a sick bed, musing, in the twilight hours, like a tired and perhaps guilty child: "Mother, what is thy will? How many times, Mother, shall I have to fight?" Members of the Indian National Congress raised funds for her medical treatment.

But the Government was watching the scene and rumours were afloat that she might be arrested. Though not particularly worried over that, she left India for two years of voluntary exile. In the meantime her work, *The Master As I saw Him*, had been published.

The days of exile were not to be quiet. In London she met Prince Kropotkin, who had to flee Russia for almost similar reasons. But Nivedita had trained her 'boys' well—in the art of manufacturing explosives, getting seditious papers printed and circulated. The story of her secret activity at home and abroad has never been fully told. One can only guess, though the police must have known—as well as suspected—more than was good for her. In England she continued her political journalism to good purpose. And when, with the passage of the Newspaper Act (1908), the extremist papers like *Yugantar*, *Sandhya*, *Navashakti* and *Bande Mataram* were suspended, she managed to get them printed in Europe and despatched to India. A difficult and dangerous operation, she must have enjoyed doing it.

During a short visit to the United States she used most of her lecture earnings in rehabilitating the Bengal revolutionaries who happened to be there. She was keen on their education. Many of the boys were bright students. But the visit had to be cut short. In England her mother was on her death bed. Nivedita rushed to her side. It was a strange but restrain meeting of two women who understood each other. After she passed away Nivedita performed her last rites.

All the while her contact with the Indian revolutionary leaders never slackened and she supervised some of their underground publications in Berlin and Geneva. And though she knew the risk of returning to India she came back in August 1909, but under an assumed name—Mrs. Margot—and reached incognito her favourite haunt in Bosepara Lane, Calcutta. She did not stir out for full three days, an act of rare restraint for one so passionate.

The spirit of the country was at its lowest. And when Aurobindo, in whom all revolutionary hopes had been centred, was acquitted from the Alipore Bomb Conspiracy case, he came out a changed man. A spiritual conversion, while in prison, had made a profound difference in his outlook and method. When Nivedita pleaded for continuing the old methods, Aurobindo's quiet reply: "Without suffering there can be no growth" must have surprised her. For herself, Kali's indomitable daughter, she held on to her proud faith in revolution. "Without bloodshed there is no freedom," that was her comment.

Aurobindo now started a new organ or national review, *Karmayogin*, but the emphasis had

shifted from party and extremist politics to the Sanatana Dharma. But Nivedita readily joined hands. The partnership, however, could not continue long. News reached Nivedita—who had, it seems, her own secret service—that the police were planning to arrest and deport Aurobindo. She immediately passed on the information. Acting on the advice Aurobindo at once left for Chandernagore and, ultimately, Pondicherry. Nivedita took over the editing of *Karmayogin*; and the issue of March 12, 1910, contained a remarkable invocation to India and National Unity, signed 'N'.

But slowly she was beginning to feel lonely, tired and withdrawn. Activities jarred on her and she left, with Jagadishchandra and his wife, for the hills and the holy places of northern India. The journey restored her to health and a gentle mood prevailed for a while. After all, life had treated her well. She had done what she had wanted to do, received the blessings of her "mighty King" whom she adored as women do the heroes of their choice. She counted the greatest among the land as her friends and co-workers. What more could one ask for?

A short visit to America, in answer to an urgent call, came in January, 1911. After the passing away of Mrs. Ole Bull she returned to India in June—to nurse another ailing woman, her Master's mother. Nivedita accompanied the procession to the burning ghat and wrote a moving letter to the son in exile, in America.

But within she was tired, tired. After a bout of activity she again fell ill. "No more work! I want to leave now." Strange words, but perhaps she

had a premonition. She gave up the institution, her Master's legacy, had her will executed.

Now nothing very much mattered. She had grown indifferent and was leading a life of meditation. An unearthly beauty lit up her body and her least movement.

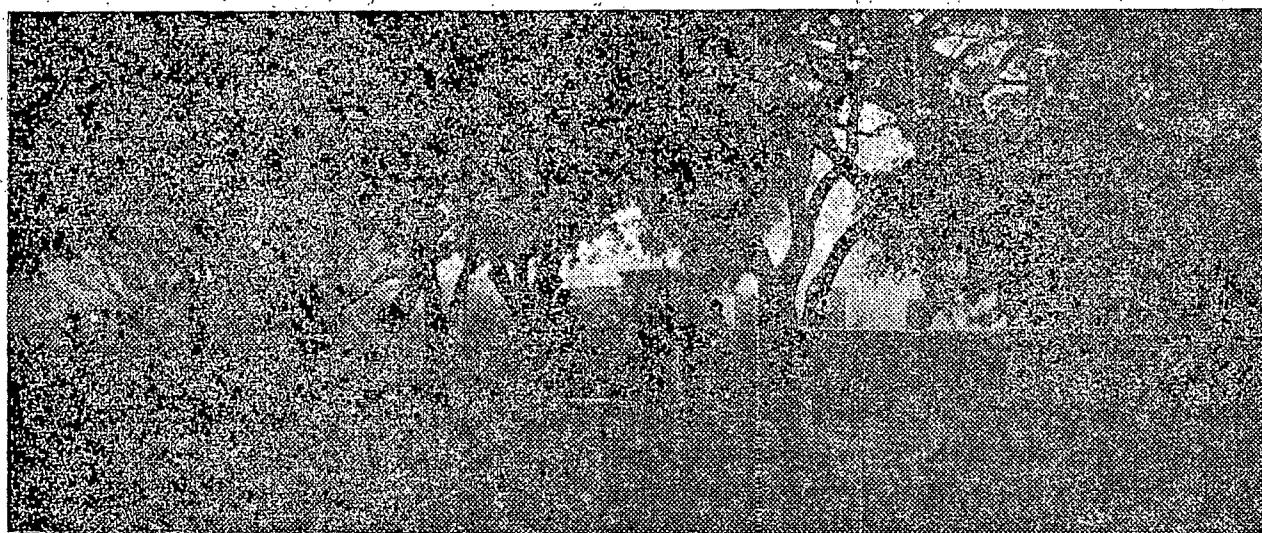
Repeated requests from friends finally compelled her to go up to Darjeeling towards the beginning of October 1911, where she put up with her old friend, the scientist Jagadishchandra Bose. Doctors declared the case—blood dysentery—dangerous, if not beyond treatment. They suggested her return to Calcutta to which of course she would not agree. She could not care less where she was going or where she was. For days she lived, "without eating, ideally pure and beautiful, nourished with strange music and the song of the earth."

All around was silence and serenity. The doctors moved to and fro like ghostly visitants. Mrs. Bose sat by the bedside, patient and without a word. When on October 13, the first rays of dawn set the hillside aglow and touched her forehead, Nivedita was heard to murmur: "The boat is sinking but I may yet see the sunrise" and murmured no more.

The next afternoon she was cremated. Ganen Maharaj of the Ramakrishna Mission performed the *mukhagni*, applied the fire to the lips. The Mission had, at last, after years of misunderstanding, taken their daughter, within their fold.

Since her fateful meeting with Swami Vivekananda in 1895, in fourteen years Nivedita had served India more ardently than most of us are likely to do in as many lives.

The only question—as she herself had wondered about another—is: Is she the last of an old order or the beginning of a new one?



PRADIP SEN



KALHANA and His *Rajatarangini*

by

AMIT RAY



S in heaven the little clouds change shape, and take on the form of elephants, leopards, monsters, serpents, horses and other beasts—so do the waves of feeling change in the hearts of mortals, from kindness to harshness as the moments vary,” so said, Kalhana, the celebrated author of ‘Rajatarangini’ or ‘The River of Kings’.

‘Rajatarangini’, the early history of Kashmir, is a classic by itself in Indian literature, and Kalhana, its author, had a deep insight into man’s nature and his psychology. He was gifted with a scientific approach and a critical temperament. His portrayal of the various classes of Kashmiri people is very graphic and true to life.

The name “Kalhana” was derived through the Prakrit “Kalhan”, from the Sanskrit word “Kalyana” meaning “blessed”. The whole ancestry and the life of Kalhana are obscure. He shares the common fate of Indian authors of note whose memory lives solely in their works. The introductory note at the end of each book of Rajatarangini, gives the author as “Kalhana”, “the son of the great Kashmiri Minister,” “the illustrious Lord Canipaka.” Historical deduction reveals that he was a Brahmin by caste. The Sanskrit style of ‘Rajatarangini’ is similar to that of the accepted style of the Pandits of Brahmin descent. The introduction to each book of his chronicle opens with prayers to Shiva in his form of Ardhanarishwar, representing the Lord in union with Parvati. Besides, Jonaraja, the continuator-author of ‘Rajatarangini’, has referred Kalhana with the epithet “dvija”. A study of his chronicle displays his friendly attitude towards Buddhism. His faith may be epitomized in one word “electicism”.

Kalhana’s probable period of birth has been assumed as the beginning of the 12th century. It is interesting to note that Kalhana prepared himself for the role of a poet. The type of Sanskrit classical poetry cultivated by Kalhana reveals that he had intensive training in Indian rhetoric, the Alankar Shastra, and the equal mastery of Sanskrit grammatical lore. His literary studies were deep and

comprehensive. All the known literature of his time, beginning from the epics to Kalidas’s ‘Raghuvansha’ and ‘Meghduta’ and Bilhan’s ‘Vikramankadevacharita’ and ‘Harshacharita’, were read by him. Stein says: “His literary training, indeed, had been of the strictly traditional type and the manner in which he employed it shows no conscious departure from the conventional norm. Yet it is clear that Kalhana was not a man of schools, absorbed in his Sastras.”

Kalhana found all possible avenues to his hereditary career closed on account of unsettled political conditions in the country. So, the best way to employ his talents, he thought, was to write down the history of his country from ancient down to his own time. He was also inspired by regional patriotism. By painting a glorious picture of the past, he wished that his countrymen should shed the inferiority complex, feel proud and try to emulate their past traditions. It is Kalhana’s sheer patriotism when he says: “Kashmir may be conquered by the force of spiritual merits, but not by the force of soldiers.” Before he started writing the ‘Rajatarangini’, Kalhana not only studied the original sources, including inscriptions of various kinds scrupulously, but also studied coins and inspected buildings.

Kalhana wrote his work during the years 1148-1149. Significantly, the century of the birth of Kalhana was marked, in the history of Kashmir, by a dynastic upheaval resulting in many important political changes. King Harsha (A.D. 1089-1101) seemed at first to give Kashmir a period of good Government, but he fell a victim to his own extravagances. After his murder, Kashmir, for seven years more, witnessed civil wars which spread death and destruction in the kingdom.

The unsettled political conditions of the time precluded all chance of patronage of the arts; hence, ‘Rajatarangini’ was not written under the patronage of any King. The elaborate description of the unsteady conditions of Sussal’s reign (A.D. 1112-20) makes it clear that he must have been of age at that time.

Kalhana has honestly and impartially related the events. While recording the contemporary hap-

penings Kalhana has presented the principal figures in the individual character and not as types. The reaction of the common folk of the disturbed political conditions of the time, is full of realistic touches. He says that the people were "callously prepared to welcome any change." His description of the idle and indifferent city crowds and their feelings, shows that he thoroughly understood the nature of his countrymen. Kalhana had a deep sense of responsibility. He considers only historians "worthy of praise, whose word, like that of a judge, keeps free from love or hatred in relating the facts of the past." and "surpasses even the stream of nectar. . . . and can place the past times before the eyes of men."

'Rajatarangini' consists of eight books (chapters) of unequal size, written in Sanskrit in nearly 8,000 verses of rare literary merit. The text may roughly be divided into three sections: 1. Books I-III, are based on traditions. 2. In Books IV-VI, dealing with the Karakota and Utpala dynasties, he has made use of the works of earlier chroniclers who were contemporaries or near contemporaries of the events they described. 3. For Books VII-VIII, dealing with the two Lohara dynasties, he made use of personal knowledge and eye-witnesses accounts, the latter often perhaps received at second or third hand.

As stated above, while writing the first three books of 'Rajatarangini', Kalhana made full use of tradition, whether written or oral, and the chronicles which were evidently based on such traditions. In writing down these traditions, at times, the critic in Kalhana comes out. For instance, he mentioned three traditions of the death of the King Lalitaditya without stating what is true, and comments: "When the great meet with their end there arise stories indicating their uncommon grandeur." King Meghavan's exploits have been described in such a fanciful manner, that Kalhana himself is apprehensive that they might not be accepted as true, but he tries to justify them by comparing them with the cruelties of Harsha, which, in their turn might not be believed, but for them these were eye-witnesses.

For the last two chapters of his book, the main sources were his contemporaries, his father, fellow-countrymen and his own memory. Thus many incidents of the treachery of Bhiksacara's troops, as categorically written by Kalhana, were witnessed by him. It is no surprise that much of the history of the previous two generations was supplied to him by his father and father's friends, who held key-posts in the politics of their times.

'Rajatarangini' forms a class by itself in Sanskrit composition. Kalhana's idea was that even a historical text must be a work of art and he has tried to make his work attractive to the readers. Evidently he was writing his book for those who were familiar with the events of the period. His book, after him, was continued by four successive historians from the point where he left off, to some years after Kashmir's annexation by the Mughal Emperor, Akbar.

'Rajatarangini' appears to wage a war in favour of benevolent despotism and deprecates feudalism. Believing in orthodox "Rajniti" (state-craft), he had his own conception of good Government. Explicitly or implicitly 'Rajatarangini' carries the idea that a strong King is the ideal King, who has firm control over unruly elements, but is benevolent towards his people and sympathetic to their wishes. He chooses his ministers with discretion, and listens to their counsels with respect."

Kalhana has shown his unflinching disapproval of the petty feudal chiefs, who were the cause of anarchy and confusion in Kashmir since the death

of Harsha. At times he becomes pessimistic and shows his prophetic vision. The words put in the mouth of Harsha symbolizes it: "This land, after having been a virtuous woman, has fallen like a prostitute into the arms of insolent. Henceforth, whoever knows how to succeed by mere intrigue will aspire to that Kingdom, whose power has gone."

There is another special feature of this great work. It is a saga showing the force of Karma. Whatever good or bad a man does in his life, Kalhana believes, has his wages in the life to come. Often the force of Karma shapes events and provides the basic moral sanctions. Fate, according to Kalhana, is the second force influencing human destiny. Fate is sometimes used as a synonym for God. God or the Gods often influence human affairs. Sometimes adverse fate is overcome by those who trust their arms. Here also 'Rajatarangini' gives another hopeful message to his countrymen that whatever fate or the Creator might have in store for them, only a strong king confident of his power could save Kashmir. 'Rajatarangini' interlinks the Karma of the kings with that of his subjects. Good kings arise through the merits of their subjects. A king and his subjects could mould the orders of nature.

Kalhana in writing 'Rajatarangini' set a tradition in history-writing. The mission of the historian, according to Kalhana, "is to make vivid before one's eyes pictures of a bygone age." Kalhana was aware that his work would not only achieve permanence, but would enliven all the actors as well as himself. He had another object also in view. He says: "This saga, which is properly made up, should be used for kings as a stimulant or a sedative, like a physic, according to time and place." Kalhana expected that both good and bad kings would derive profit from his work. He is a staunch advocate of historical impartiality.

'Rajatarangini' has some shortcomings too. Neither the sources used by the author were critically analysed and discussed, nor he has separated historical legends from history. As regards the defects of the records and the conflicting opinions which according to Kalhana's introduction, rendered his task difficult, it should be equally difficult for any scholar to get any distinct indication of the same. The author's narrative becomes more legendary and anecdotal in the middle of the ninth century, when one seems to reach contemporary records. The chronology followed by the author is also not based on scientific data. As one critic rightly observes, "One cannot, of course, expect critical judgment in matters of chronology from an author who has started dating history from a legendary date of the coronation of Yudhisthir from the epics, and attributes three hundred years to a single ruler, Ranadilya." Kalhana could not and should not be blamed for this, as it was a general trend among the Indians, so precisely described by Alberuni: "Unfortunately the Hindus do not pay much attention to the historical order of things, they are very careless in relating the chronological succession of their Kings, and when they are pressed for information, and are at a loss, not knowing what to say they invariably take to tale-telling."

The earlier part of this great work is more a fiction, and the latter, that is early medieval part, is real history. 'Rajatarangini' describes vividly the waning glory of Kashmir—intrigues, murders, seditions, civil wars and treachery. It is the history of kings, royal families and the nobility, justifying the title "River of the Kings".

Notwithstanding its little shortcomings, 'Rajatarangini' doubtless forms one of the important chapters of the history of India.



THE CHHAMUNDA ROGUE

by P.J. BYRNE



HE year 1944, the month April. The world was at war. India was in imminent danger of a Japanese invasion. Calcutta was the base for our operations against the Japanese in Burma. Things looked pretty gloomy. In this humdrum and turmoil, there was one gleam of light. I was about to enjoy my annual leave, far from the noise and bustle of the great City, filled with Military and Naval Forces of the two or three contending Powers.

I was going to the quiet backwoods of Orissa, where for at least the period of my leave, I could be at ease.

My correspondence with the Divisional Forest Officer had resulted in the reservation of the Chhamunda Reserved Forest Block. On the 3rd of April I met the DFO at his residence and was handed my shooting permit, and after a short halt, I commenced my journey to the Forest Block, distant 30 miles from Forest Headquarters. The trip was a very pleasant repast. I encountered deer of different species, a small herd of Bison, saw tracks of elephants and the pug marks of a large tiger. At noon I reached the small picturesque Forest Bungalow, surrounded on all sides by beautiful Sal forests and flanked by the village of Chhamunda.

As my arrival had already been notified, the Ranger and his staff were at the bungalow to receive me. After exchanging pleasantries I retired

for a wash up and lunch, requesting the Ranger to meet me at tea.

Over our cups of tea, the Ranger gave me a detailed account of the shooting prospects and also gave the very disquieting information, that a rogue elephant was at large in the neighbouring jungles and had killed a number of villagers in the district. It had, till then, never entered the Chhamunda reserve, nor had it been seen by any of the villagers of the hamlets that dotted the reserve.

My battery consisted of a 12 bore shot gun, a .300 Savage and a 10.75 Mauser rifles. I had only three old solid bullets for the Mauser, so on the whole was not in a position to challenge the entry of the rogue into my temporary domains.

During the next four or five days, I had a very good bag of game, which included Sambhur, Chital, Wild Boar, Panther, and a grand old Bison Bull. Stripes had till then eluded me, but I was confident of getting one in the period left at my disposal, or at least that was what I thought.

Early one morning, I was aroused by the clamour of a number of villagers outside my room, and on demanding to know the cause of this uproar, was told that the previous night, the rogue had killed a villager of Jamloi, six miles away and in the Chhamunda Shooting Block. I was asked to accompany the party to recover the body. So at last the rogue had entered Chhamunda.

After a hasty wash and tea, I shouldered my Mauser having charged the magazine with two

soft and the three old solids, and set out with two villagers, selected from the crowd that called on me. The two, Damodar and Bhimo, were brothers of the victim who was known as Sombaria. The three had a large sugar cane plantation at the foot of some hills on the outskirts of Jamloi village. Damodar, the eldest, who possessed a single barrel, muzzle loader, accompanied Sombaria to a small hut built alongside the plantation, with a view to guarding their holding against predators. Hearing some swishing noises around midnight the pair ventured out with a lighted lantern. Within yards of their hut, Sombaria who was in lead, was seized by an elephant and hurled against a tree. He was capable of only a single outcry. Damodar in the meanwhile aimed his gun and fired at the elephant. Climbing a nearby tree, Damodar witnessed the destruction of his hut, which he could make out by the faint gleam given by the lantern. The elephant then turned its attention to the light which it kicked out of existence. Shivering in the tree Damodar waited for the first signs of dawn. Seeing nothing of the rogue he came down, reloaded his muzzle loader, collected his brother from the village and ran post haste to Chhamunda, intending to make a report at the Police Station ten miles off from Chhamunda. Hearing that a shikari was in occupation of the Forest Bungalow, he was persuaded by the Forest guard and others to call on me.

I took down his report and sent off two reliable villagers to apprise the Law, after which I started off with the brothers as already stated.

The trip to Jamloi was uneventful. At Jamloi, we were joined by a number of villagers, who reported hearing noises of the elephant coming from the top of one of the nearby hills. On asking them if other elephants were about, they replied in the negative. Without further waste of time, I requested Damodar to lead me to the spot where the tragedy had occurred. He wanted to take a number of villagers with him, but to this I did not agree, so with much reluctance the brothers once again set out with me. After a short while we reached the fatal spot.

With the true characteristics of a rogue elephant, the brute had done his evil job with a vengeance. The body had been torn in half, the head being separated from the rest of the corpse. Sadly the two gathered the pitiful remains, but were unable to find the head. All this time I was maintaining a sharp lookout, hoping the rogue would not rush out on us.

Noticing a crow sitting aloft and some distance from us, I drew the attention of the others to it, especially as it was constantly looking down at a particular spot. Slowly wending our way in the direction of the tree on which the crow was sitting, we came on a small tree surrounded by heavy bush. The buzzing of flies soon led us to the spot where we found the head of the luckless man. From the time we reached the spot, till our departure, I had not heard any sounds of the elephant, nor did my companions contribute any information to this effect. Either the villagers had imagined hearing the rogue or the brute had probably gone off before our arrival. Save for its spoor at the scene of the murder, I saw no other signs. From the size of the imprints I concluded the elephant as being a big animal, so the morbid thoughts that passed through my mind can well be imagined. Here was I faced with a killer elephant, and all I had to battle with were three old solid bullets—scarcely a pleasant thought to dwell on. However, I was thankful I reached Chhamunda in the late afternoon without incident.

Next morning I sent off a letter to the DFO,

requesting the loan of a heavy rifle, and reporting the killing of the man at Jamloi village.

At noon a Police party arrived and after having tea with me left for the scene of the tragedy. They returned late that evening stating that they had been unable to get to Jamloi, due to an elephant haunting the track. On asking them if they had seen the animal they declined to answer, but said they had heard unmistakable sounds that could only come from an elephant. The party spent the night with me and returned to their headquarters next morning.

On the morning of the 10th Lokenath the village Pujari, went for his morning prayers and ablutions to the small tank that lay a scant two hundred yards to the east of the forest bungalow. It was his daily custom. This morning, however, death awaited him in the form of a rogue elephant, for scarcely had he reached the water's edge, the rogue, which had been in the vicinity of the tank rushed upon him and practically tore him into bits. One shrill scream followed by the trumpeting of the elephant was all that was heard. It was a little after 5 a.m. and my servant had just brought me my first cup of tea, when an excited crowd rushed into the bungalow announcing the death of the Pujari. No one however, had seen the elephant, apart from hearing its trumpeting and the death scream of poor Lokenath.

I jumped out of bed donned on my shikar gear, picked up the Mauser, loaded it and set off towards the tank. No one accompanied me, nor did I care for company. Reaching the tank, I was appalled with the sight that confronted me. Trampled into the soft earth of the bank was the lower half of a human body, while half on land and half in the water were the remnants of poor Lokenath. My feelings can better be imagined than described. The spectacle was indeed gruesome to put it mildly, and for a moment completely unnerved me. However, this would not do. The elephant may have been lurking in the neighbourhood so looking at the torn mangled remains of an unfortunate fellow being would not help matters, nor would it help avenge the victim.

Walking around the tank, I soon picked up the huge spoor of the killer, which I found was leading towards a distant range of hills bordering the Greepanak nallah, a favourite haunt of elephants. I was now joined by my tracker Budu, and together we took up the trail, determined to bring the murderer to book.

Beyond the tank the tracks led into heavy Sal forest, where the going was comparatively easy but beyond this Sal belt we entered grass and tree jungle where caution had to be maintained against the chance of an ambush, a contingency we hardly relished after viewing what we had a little earlier that morning. Soon we were in the vicinity of the nallah, where the going was very rough owing to numerous rocks and boulders that lay around. It was nearly 8.30 a.m. by my watch, and still there were no signs of the rogue.

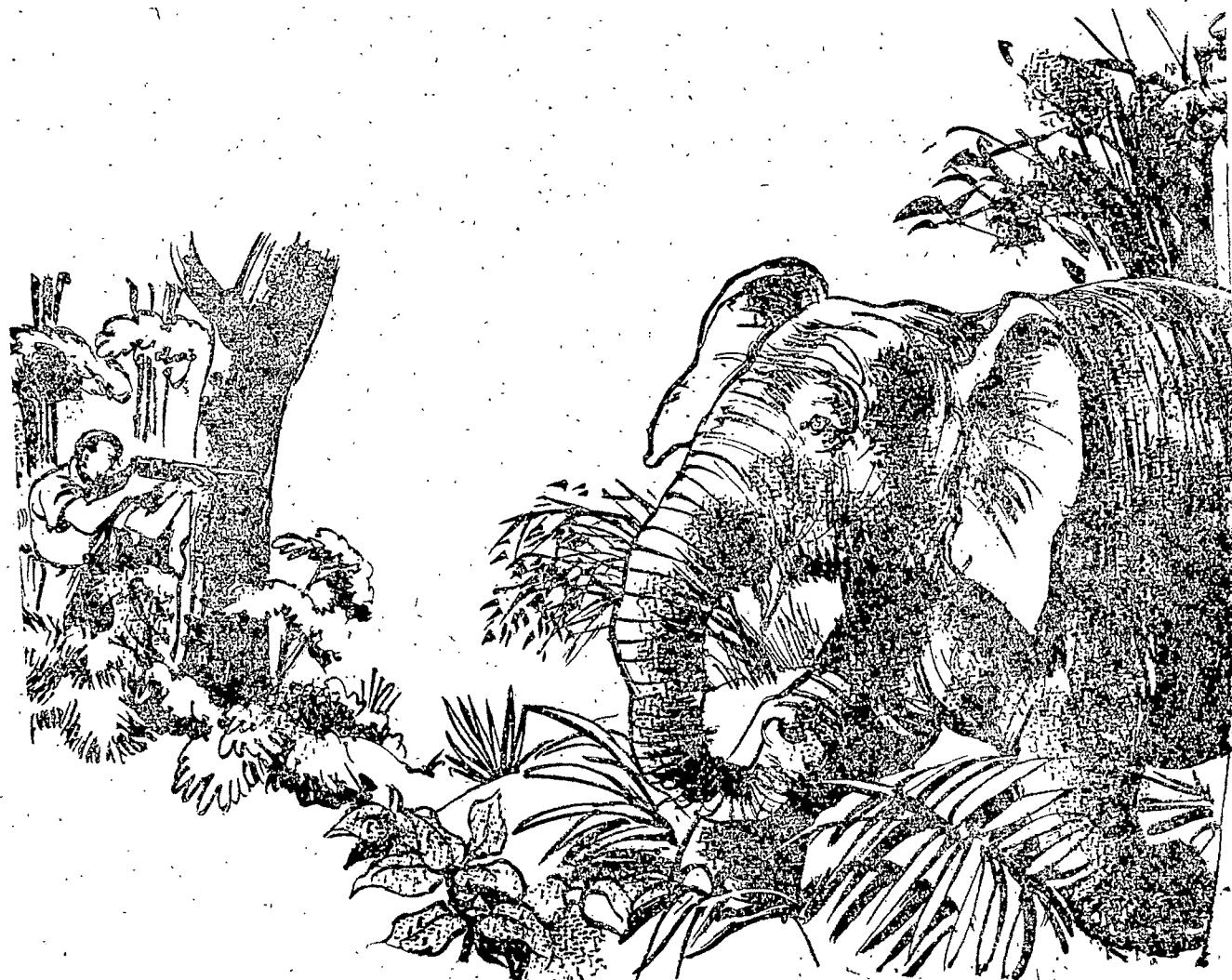
The sun was becoming hotter each passing hour, and we were more than four miles from the bungalow, when I called a halt, under the shade of a large overhanging rock. When leaving the bungalow I had put a couple of oranges into my pocket, so taking out one I shared it with Budu. After a smoke we took up the trail and had proceeded less than a mile, when we heard the breaking of bamboos ahead of us. Budu refused to go any further, and insisted that we return. The mangled remains he had seen by the tank was too much for him.

Putting him into the safety of a large tree, I carefully wended my way towards the place from where the sounds had come. The area was very heavily dotted with large clumps of bamboo and huge trees. Proceeding cautiously, testing the wind, I had come about a quarter of a mile from where I had left Budu, when a sudden movement ahead froze my steps. Looking intently at the spot I made out the form of the elephant, standing partially behind a clump of bamboo. He was facing away from me and it was the movement of his trunk that had arrested my attention. He was less than a hundred yards off, but too far for an effective shot, more so as he had his nether regions towards me. Testing the wind, avoiding treading on twigs or turning over rocks, I covered about half the distance, when misfortune befell me.

A projecting root tripped me and I fell flat on the trail. Very fortunately there was a large tree just at hand, behind which I took cover, with all the speed I was capable of. Whether the rogue had seen me or not I am unable to tell you, the wind was still blowing across; but in all probability he must have heard the noise made by my fall, for there was a terrific trumpet followed by a very shrill blood curdling scream. Next moment I saw the huge brute rush along the trail in my general direction. Very slowly I raised the 10.75 Mauser, praying that the solid bullet in the chamber would do all

that was expected of it. When about thirty yards from where I stood, the elephant partially turned to the left. That very moment I fired at a spot between the eye and the ear, the immediate effect being a halt in its progress. Slowly the huge brute heeled over and lay down. To me, shivering with fear behind my friendly tree, it appeared the animal was lying down for a snooze, only the slow raising of its trunk and few spasmodic kicks brought home to me the fact that the killer was breathing his last. To make things doubly sure I very cautiously advanced to a position from where I put a bullet into its forehead. The whole body shivered and lay still. Sombaria and Lokenath had been avenged.

Budu who now joined me, expressed his gratitude by vigorously shaking my hand. He told me to remain at the spot, while he summoned the Chhamunda villagers. Within a short time hundreds of villagers had gathered around the elephant, which was a huge Makhna, my servant had arrived with my camera, so for a while I took a few photographs of the elephant. By late afternoon I was back at the bungalow. From the village there were shouts of joy while now and again I heard the death chants of poor Lokenath's widow and children. I gave the poor widow a small monetary present to enable her to perform the funeral rites and subsequent ceremonies. So ended the career of the dreaded Chhamunda Rogue elephant.





THE SANDS OF TIME

NIKHIL SEN



HE rain started afresh. Srimanta Sardar sat in the 'parlour' of his hut. The hut badly needed a roofing. Water leaked into the room in drops. Tufani had placed earthen pots already on the spots where the drops were falling.

The Sardar stared at the dripping water on the pots. He used to get a meagre pension of ten rupees a month. That, too, had been in arrears since Baisak, the first month of the Bengali calendar. The zamindary estate of Daulatpur was now under the Court of Wards. Srimanta Sardar had expected it. For he seemed to know that after the death of Zamindar Mukundaram Choudhury all the wealth and weal of Daulatpur would go to the dogs.

The Sardar wished for death rather than a life in death. Was there any good in his surviving further? He would be eighty-five by next Aswin. He was old. But he would not know peace of mind even in death. The pale and weary appearance of Tufani would haunt him even after death. He had brought her up from her very infancy. She was an orphan. Her father went to the forest along with other village folk to collect bamboos. They used to go cutting bamboos every year after the harvest. But he did not come back. He was killed, so came the report, by wild elephants. Her mother too did not withstand the shock. She drowned herself in the river and thus ended the pangs of separation. Ironically, it was the Sardar who had once rescued her, when she was a mere child, from her watery grave.

Tucking up his dhoti round the waist, Palas De was returning from the paddy field at that time. While passing along the waterlogged road of the Local Board, he stopped before the Sardar's hut and called him: "How are you, Sardara?"

Srimanta cast a blank glance at his enquirer. His eyes were lustreless. The Sardar had lost his vision partially but he recognised the voice.

"Who's there? Palas?"

"Yes, Sardara".

"Where are you going in this weather?" the Sardar enquired.

"To the paddy field at the Asvattali, Srimanta-da," Palas answered, raising his water-drenched headgear made of palm-leaf.

Palas walked towards the Sardar's hut and said, "The 'aus' is now ripening. It is a good harvest this year. But the paddy is wasted due to excessive rain".

Palas crossed the water-logged courtyard of the Sardar and sat down on a mat by his side.

"Now tell me, where shall I get money to pay off the Jotedars and Mahajans? How can I also maintain myself through the year?"

Palas put off his wet headgear and hung it down on a bamboo peg by the side of the Varandah.

"Oh, I am drenched to the marrow. Where's your tobacco, Sardara?"

He cast his glance inside the hut and searched in vain for a face, smiling and peeping. He then sat down to prepare the tobacco. His face glowed as he blew the lighted charcoal dust with closed eyes.

Srimanta looked at him and said: "There will be more rains, I tell you, Palas. More floods."

"How do you know?"

The Sardar pointed out a long line of black ants on the bamboo pole above his head. The ants were hurriedly entering a hole, each carrying a white egg in their mouth. The Sardar gazed at them and added: "They get the scent of the rains beforehand. That's why they are carrying their eggs to a safer place".

Srimanta blew a puff of smoke and went on unconcernedly.

"Everything you see will be flooded. All the huts and ghats, the fields will be submerged in water. And everything will be washed away. It happened during the tidal bore of the late fifties of the last century. The tall trees, even the temple tops of the village were submerged under deep water. There was no trace of any living being—only water, water, everywhere".

The Sardar became poetic. Palas was hearing him listlessly.

"Pooh! You are a child! What do you know about the tidal waves of the fifties? Srimanta smiled displaying his toothless gum and then con-

tinued. "When I accompanied your grandfather's bridegroom party I was very young."

Srimanta cracked a joke and then cleared his throat with a cough. Palas changed the bubble-bubble again and handed it over to the Sardar's shaky hand.

"What happened then, Sardara?"

The Sardar remained mum. He began to smoke his hookah with closed eyes. His face had long furrows and the skin on his body was wrinkled. The Sardar steamed off a mouthful of smoke and said: "Well, brother, all those days are gone! I then had strength like a giant. With the help of a bamboo pole I could beat off fifty or more youths of your age. Alas! What a contrast! I've a foot in the grave now!"

The Sardar sat erect with his bubble-bubble in his hand. He forgot to smoke. He lost himself, his mind wandering somewhere else.

Suddenly a thunderbolt rent the sky, followed by a harsh cracking sound. The sky flashed up for a while. A pair of pigeons sat atop an adjacent penthouse with beaks in their feathered wings. Frightened, they flew back to the cornices of the mud wall. The Sardar seemed to have got the clue to his story at last. He began to smoke his pipe in spite of the fact that it had no fire.

"Yes, where am I?" he asked Palas and then finding the clue, continued. "Yes, I'm speaking of the cyclone and the tidal bore of the fifties, am I not?"

Palas nodded his head and took away the hookah from the Sardar's trembling hand to change it again.

"I was serving under the Zamindars of Daulatpur. There were two and a half clubmen under me. They were always ready with their shield and spear at my beck and call".

Zamindar Mukunda Ram Chaudhuri was proceeding towards his "Katchari" in his barge on that fateful day. He was accompanied by his wife Bidyotlata and his little daughter Malatilata. The peacock-framed barge set out on the river and sailed like a white cloud breaking through the foamy waves of the Padma. It had been drizzling since the daybreak and the river looked alarmingly fateful. But none of them took notice of it. Zamindar Babu was the first to point it out. He called him in the evening and said:

"Look at the sky, Srimanta. It does not bode well. There may be a cyclone. Ask the boatmen to take the barge to the shore".

Srimanta looked up to the sky following the bewildered gaze of the Zamindar. The whole atmosphere appeared dull, motionless. It was the lull before the storm. He noticed with alarm, dark clouds like a pack of monstrous vultures flying towards them over the white waves of the Padma from the north-east horizon. The clouds flew swiftly in the sky. A prolonged wailing reached his ear, resembling the cries in chorus of a million human beings in utter distress. It made Srimanta shiver. The meaning of this abnormal phenomenon was not unknown to him. No sooner had the barge cast its anchor at the shore than the nor'wester broke in all fury. Like a thousand and one fiends the river started dancing, foaming and surging in rage. And the whole firmament—the earth and sky—was writhing in agony.

Srimanta Sardar pushed the Zamindar Babu and his family inside the desolate hut of a fisherman on the bank. He stood up at the doorstep and said: "Srimanta Sardar is not ungrateful, my Lord. So long he is alive, he will see no harm comes to you."

But Srimanta Sardar suddenly burst into tears at this stage. Like a helpless child he sobbed and

said in a choked voice: "Ah, but could I save them?"

Tears rolled down his cheeks. In choked voice he went on: The hungry Padma had snatched them all making a fool of him. He could not protect them. Srimanta Sardar was a terror in his time. Even the sepoys of the East India Company were scared to hear his name uttered. Kaloo Sheikh, the terrible, had to go to the police station with his broken skull to lodge a complaint against him. Yet could he save his masters? The Sardar raised his feeble fists and threw them in the air.

He continued: The tempo of the storm began to increase gradually after dusk. The old hut on the river bank began to crack and shake violently at the gusts of wind. The whirling and the howling storm blew on menacingly, and the loud sound of laughter of the roaring river rolled on. All on a sudden, the old penthouse gave in.

"Come out ma with Malatidi. Please come out, you too, my Lord! The house is breaking down".

The Sardar cried out at the top of his voice. He protected the roof with his both hands like a giant.

Palas was listening listlessly. Even the Sardar was not aware from where he had mustered all that strength that evening. For with a great push he set aside the crumbling hut and freed himself. When he came out of the hut, the madness of nature was going on at full pitch. The angry waves of river Padma were beating against the ground with all their might, hissing and roaring like serpents. Suddenly a cracking sound was heard a little way off. And a great lump of earth fell into the hungry womb of the river. A helpless voice was also reached his ears.

"Srimanta! Srimanta! Save your Malatidi".

It was the pitiful cry of Bidyotlata! Srimanta rushed towards her. But it was too late. When he reached the spot he found that the Padma had already snatched away a vast chunk of earth from the shore and flew on frenziedly with all its violence. Srimanta made up his mind. He was dauntless. He jumped into the roaring river braving the waves and sweeping currents of the Padma.

When he had regained his consciousness he had found himself thrown headlong on the muddy bed of a sand bank. Beside him there was a broken pinnace. And strangely a little child of three or four was wrapped tightly in his arms. The child was motionless but not lifeless. Srimanta placed his ear on her breast. He knew how to bring life to a drowned person. He raised up the child before his eyes. But, strange, the girl in his arms was not the daughter of his master! Srimanta heaved a deep sigh of remorse and frustration.

The Sardar stopped at this stage. He looked blankly at the road by the side of his hut. The road was submerged under water. A dove sat on the leafy branch of a Sajnay tree in the rain. Palas looked at it casually. Tufani came out pushing aside the bamboo door of the hut. She blushed as soon as she met Palas. Thrusting the loose edge of her sari in her mouth, Tufani giggled and retreated hurriedly into her room.

"Do you mean to chat all the time and do no better than just puff away? None of you has any work to do."

She spoke from inside.

There was a mock temper in her voice as though she was very annoyed by the presence of Palas. The Sardar noticed it and said:

"Well, are we two wild animals of the forest that we would devour you if you come out?"

The Sardar cracked a joke and guffawed.

She threw a glance at Palas and fled away, shutting the thatched bamboo door with a jiggle.

Palas did not utter a word but began to simper with his head bent low.

"Look at the boldness of girls today", said the Sardar. "In our days womenfolk hardly appeared before their men during the day. Now, what change has taken place? Oh, God, how long do I have to live and see this shamelessness!"

Palas took leave of him. Placing the hubble-bubble in his mouth, Srimanta Sardar looked at the footsteps of Palas in the mud instantly filled up by the rain water.

"Please don't be angry with me, grandpa", Tufani entreated the Sardar putting her arms round his neck. "Oh, no, please don't be angry with me".

"Do you know how many times I was furious with your grandma and refused to take meals prepared by her?"

"Did you?" asked Tufani smartly. "But please restrain your anger. And now finish your hot bath and sit down for your meal. I had prepared khichuri for you today." Tufani knelt down before the Sardar and lifted up the wrinkled face of the Sardar in her hands: "Be quick, I shall have to take my bath in the river".

"I shall also go", Srimanta said like a child quite agitated. "I shall accompany you, Tufani".

"Where would you like to go in my company"? "Why, to the river and have a dip in the river".

"And then suffer", Tufani retorted. "Don't forget that you are an old man suffering from rheumatism and asthma. The river is now in floods. Tomorrow is the day of the new moon. Were you not been bed-ridden last time?" Tufani stopped for a while and then continued: "Please don't waste time. The hot water is becoming cold".

"Oh, no, I won't bathe in hot water".

Srimanta Sardar sobbed like a child and threw out his fists in the air in protest. "Oh, no! I won't bathe in hot water".

"Would you like to go to the river and then suffer from asthma?"

"What do you think of me, Tufani?" The Sardar grew red with rage.

"Do you know who am I? Did you hear of the Srimanta Sardar who swam more than three miles braving the waves of turbulent Padma during the stormy night of the fifties?"

Srimanta Sardar was excited and cried out: "Bring my umbrella. I am going to the river to have my bath". Srimanta Sardar was trembling with excitement, like a reed in the wind. "Look here, Tufani, the Sardar of the Choudhuri's is still alive".

Srimanta Sardar tried to stand up erect with his body bent up like a bow. But he could not bear the strain and fell down on the ground. Tufani hurriedly raised him up and said smilingly:

"No more bravado, please. Be a good boy and take your bath".

"What! Do you laugh at me, Tufani—ridicule me because I slip down?" The Sardar flared up. "Now, of course, I am advanced in age. The Sardar took his stick in his hand and raised it to strike Tufani: "Look here, Tufani, see my strength". Srimanta Sardar actually aimed his stick at Tufani's head to strike. But the stick fell down from his feeble hand:

Srimanta Sardar hung his head in shame and sat down with his cheeks on his folded khees. Tufani at last took him to the earthen jar of boiling water and requested him to finish his bath like a good boy. She reminded him not to sprinkle too much water in this foul weather.

Tufani then rushed to the river with her red towel on her shoulder. Srimanta Sardar heaved a long sigh. Tears rolled down his cheeks. He sobbed like a helpless child. What else could he do? This seemed to be the only way to give vent to his pent-up anger and agony, to wash them away with hot tears. He was now old. Age had crippled him, maimed him, made him helpless and forlorn. The Sardar covered his face in his palms and whimpered like a wounded vulture after a duel.

*And strangely a little child of three or four
was wrapped tightly in his arms.*



SCIENCE AND MODERN SOCIETY

U. P. BASU



HE decade in which we are now living is momentous in history. Man by the power of his own creative intelligence is altering his environmental and social conditions, and even overcoming the forces of nature. He has ventured more than 2,40,000 miles from the earth into the void of space and landed on the moon. He has learnt how to graft the heart of a man onto the body of another. In spite of various attainments, he is being confronted with other problems of living. Never before in history has there been such an increase in the number of people living in our planet. The world's population, which today numbers somewhat over three thousand million, may shoot up to six thousand million or even more by the end of the century. This has never occurred before in history —a doubling of the population in about 30 years. In the year 1966, for example, the world's population has increased by 65 million, but the production of food-stuffs in that year did not increase at all. This means that no food was produced for these additional 65 million people. Population is increasing, but cultivable lands are being allowed to shrink through urbanization mostly under the impact of science. Over and above this, mass urban migration causes the growth of choked slum areas in the cities. In Madras, for example, slum-dwellers formed 23.8% of the total population in 1961. During the past eight years, many new industries have cropped up in the city and its population has also increased from 1.72 million to 2.1 million. This boom in the city's population has, however, been found to be confined entirely to the slum areas where 43% of the total population now live. If the trend continues, over-crowding, urban glut and technological backlash can spell an all-round crisis within a reasonable time. And life in our society would be endangered.

ROLE OF SCIENCE

Can science assuage the conditions of society? The most essential requirement of any society is food. No one should go hungry, the production and supply of food must be sufficient to feed people of the society. There are regions (Western Europe and North America) where food production is increasing more rapidly than population. There is another area (the Soviet Union, the countries of Eastern Europe, Japan and Mexico) where food production is increasing at about the same rate as the increase in population. China is trying to adjust. There are again countries like India, in which food production

yield hybrids, excessive use of manures, and proper application of plant nutrition offer better crops per hectare. The fullest use of the great discoveries in agricultural science are yet to be made on a large scale. The yields per hectare of maize and rice would be found to be at least four times as high in Europe, America, the Soviet Union and certain other countries as those in the developing countries. In order to double yields per hectare, the consumption of plant nutrients must be increased at least 10 times. Simultaneously, irrigation techniques are to be improved, plant-pests are to be combated, and a hardier seed is to be used. All these refer only to the material side of the problem. Necessary human conditions are also to be adjusted. This is possible by weeding out illiteracy amongst the farmers by proper education. The largest number of illiterates is to be found in those countries that suffer most severely from the shortage of food. Remedial measures would include a widely effective agricultural extension service with provision for adequate supply of chemical fertilizers, insecticides, fungicides etc. in all of our 5,00,000 villages. It is reported that the West Bengal Government will take necessary action at least in certain districts.

CURRENT TRENDS

A new political force of great dynamism has been evident in society in recent years. It has arisen in different countries, to some extent irrespective of the existing political system or the degree of economic development. Its proponents are usually youth students and young workers in different fields. The immediate causes and nature of action differ. A preliminary survey would, however, reveal that the movement has some relation to the basic economic and social forces. As the modern thought of science and the consequent development of technology have some influence on social changes, the question arises whether science itself can orient the above influences. One will have to admit that the movement in all the countries shares a common dissatisfaction with the present state of society whether with reference to the problem of food supply, transport, education, or even the administration itself. The majority of youth are growing up in a stiflingly artificial, de-humanised society, divorced from the roots of their environment and groping for positive ideals and needs of the human personality. In the class rooms they seldom receive any inspiration from their teachers. They expect enlightenment on the relationship between knowledge and its practical application and they receive "pedantry and alienated erudition". As a result, they are completely estranged and convinced that all systematic

and disciplined intellectual effort is a waste of time. A possible consequence is the sharp resistance and protest against established institutions. Activism, however, must be tempered by a sense of realism. Sporadic demonstrations without any discernible goals, will lead neither to improvement in economic conditions, nor to the rectification of evils of society. In a very real sense, students are responsible for the future of their countries. In Indonesia the students have been a key factor in anti-government demonstrations and they virtually catapulted the military to power. In Latin America, students have had a constitutional voice in university administration. In many other areas students were instrumental in their countries' independence movements, and have never lost their radical nationalist inclinations. Students in many nations are among the effective groups in society to organise any action. Able student leadership, combined with the support of educational officials and the government, can lead to a progressive movement.

WEST BENGAL

All the above questions are agitating the minds of the people of West Bengal. Who knows whether she will show the way to the development of socialism in India. Everyone is thinking about the aims and intentions of the present movement. Is it merely to dismantle the existing order rather than to offer an alternative in its place? Do the leaders of the movement lack a deep knowledge of the social laws which govern society, and which subsequently establish the necessary connections amongst the different groups and classes, the working-class, the intelligentsia etc. The recent turbulent events certainly create law-and-order problems. But were not the so-called anti-social elements used in the past by some political parties? The parties might have to pay today the price of dirty politics that they had failed to discourage in the past. Has continuous uninterrupted control by one party created vested interests in our country in the pattern of administrative system? And the different parties are now attempting to strengthen their own mass base at the expense of others. The people who are just beginning to make their own political decisions are taking advantage of the situation. Senseless violence seems to be becoming a way of life. It is being particularly seen in Bombay, Hyderabad, Indore and in certain parts of West Bengal. The social conditions seem grim. But can we not visualize a happier way of life?

We will have to integrate our scientific knowledge for the betterment of society. After partition, people of diverse professions migrated to this country. Some of them had been settled in areas with jobs different from their traditional trades, and some have been rehabilitated with suitable ones. Fishermen who migrated from the river districts of East Bengal, if compelled to make their living from the shallow West Bengal rivers, can hardly find enough opportunities. With the help of modern fishing techniques, the migrants might have developed their traditional occupation to the level of an industry as has been possible in Rajasthan. The Fisheries Research Centre at Udaipur conducts a many-sided programme which includes a survey of the State's existing fish fauna, their feeding and breeding habits, and a complete analysis of soil, water and plankton. The result has been a tremendous growth of fish potentials. It is ironical that the same fish finds its way to Howrah Mandi with a daily sale of 300 metric tons. This development has provided scientists, workers and fishermen with employment. We have our D.V.C. areas and many other ponds,

tanks and artificial lakes in West Bengal where we might have developed a fishing industry. The Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute at Barrackpore is moving for the development of techniques in pisciculture. A special type of pool called the bund-type tanks are being constructed where carp breeding is induced naturally. We also find that the Directorate of Fisheries, West Bengal, is offering technical assistance. We may wait for the relief of needy fishermen. Similarly, we may look into our traditional herb collection and its subsequent utilization. Openings are to be created for the application of modern science by qualified technologists and engineers in different lines for the betterment of our society.

Bengal took the lead in all directions for social uplift. Even the sulphuric acid plant to manufacture the key chemical, was first started in this area. It was felt that without industrial development none of the economic and/or social problems could be solved. But mostly for political or other reasons progress was not satisfactory. Later on, dilemma, indecision and sluggishness hindered the onward march. We are to decorate our windows after laying a solid foundation at the base. The problem of illiteracy amongst our masses is to be faced. In training our students we have to look into their basic problems so that in the course of time they become four-square to face the world. From an early age they find poverty in the midst of affluence hypocrisy, in stating one set of values and following another, promises without fulfillment and empty words from their elders. They resent that their elders do not also follow the maxim which they find in their statute. They observe caste discrimination, though it is outlawed by the Constitution. They are yet to know what system of education will be ultimately adopted in their schools. The language controversy continues unabated. Indian Judges point out that Indian laws are irreplaceably embodied in the medium of English, but we are moving for the expansion of a language knowing fully that a large section will not accept it. We believe in religion and cover our deities in temples with gold and jewels, but we keep the surrounding places unclean. There is no rigid system in recording the gradual progress of students in classes, and at the end of a session we move to examine their merit by a single examination. In our modern society we do not prefer to follow any system in any field of our activity, and to us discipline is becoming a dirty word. Science that follows a systematic path in revealing truth, would demand a change in the social structure for its progress.

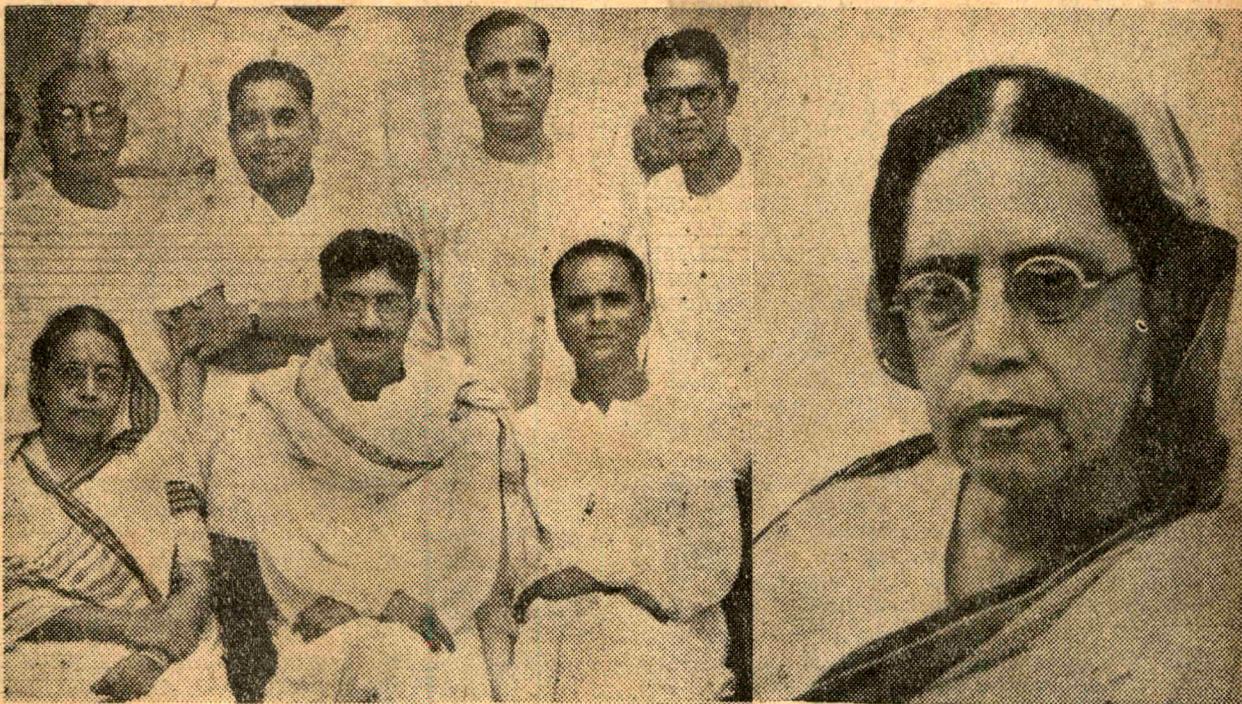
Science enriches life by utilising the available resources. But in the words of Prof. Blackett, "Science is no magic wand to wave over a poor country to make it a rich one. The problems of India are so vast and the poverty is so great that everything—almost everything—must be sacrificed to economic growth". We have scientists and technologists of eminence. We should be proud of our new and sophisticated industries. In April last our country even entered the atomic age as electricity began to flow on a tentative basis from the first atomic power station at Tarapur. Modern technology has transferred the faces of many countries, and there is no reason why our people will not be able to change the economy of our country too. This would, however, need a coordination of efforts which would involve authorities everywhere.

MAN'S lunar odyssey clearly shows that modern science and technology fused with those of management and organization can turn dreams into reality.



ON FOOT IN NOAKHALI

SUKHALATA RAO



SACHIN DUTT



UKHALATA RAO was one of the few gifted thinkers and writers who, to put it in Emerson's words, are great not because they can alter the matter, but because they can alter the state of mind." When she died at 83 in July last, full of years and honours, her demise was deeply mourned by a wide circle of her admirers including numerous readers of her work which covered nearly six decades, to be more precise, at least three generations. Young and old alike enjoyed the charm of her writing in the country where she was held in high esteem. Scion of a distinguished family of undivided Bengal and married to an equally talented family in Orissa, Mrs. Rao lived through a spacious time with her personality, rich in dignity and poise, charming candour and gracefulness that cast a spell over anybody close to her, an example of a remarkable woman whose "intellect and emotions were perfectly blended."

Sukhalata was born on October 23, 1886, in Calcutta. Her father, the celebrated Upendra Kishore Roy Choudhuri (1863-1915), formerly of Mymensingh now in East Pakistan, was a pioneer writer in Bengali juvenile literature. In fact he was pioneer in the country in many fields, including photography. The first half-tone block-maker in India, he had something to contribute to the block-making industry. Her grandfather, the late Syam Sunder Roy was an erudite scholar in Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian languages in his time. On her mother's side, Mrs. Rao's maternal grandfather Dwarkanath Ganguly was a leading social reformer and a patron of women welfare in those days. Her grandmother Dr. Kadambini Ganguly was not only the first woman graduate of Calcutta University

but the first foreign qualified medical practitioner in Bengal.

Upendra Kishore was the founder-editor of the "Sandesh", one of the oldest Bengali monthly magazines for children which created a new school of writers, foremost among them being his beloved daughter Sukhalata and immortal son Sukumar Roy. Sister and brother grew up in perfect mental health under unique environments often enlivened by the presence of Rabindranath Tagore who was intimate with the family. Sukumar's poems and prose pieces opened for Bengali children a world of fun, and fantasy which they had not known before. But it all ended too soon when life was cut short by premature death. His dazzling mantle, however, has fallen on his son Satyajit Roy, the world-famous film director.

Sukhalata's own uncles Sarada Ranjan, Kuiada Ranjan, Pramada Ranjan were also illustrious scholars, writers and sportsmen, P.R.'s daughter and Sukhalata's cousin Mrs. Lila Majumdar is a famed writer in Bengali literature.

Sukhalata had her early education at Brahmo Girls' School, Calcutta, (she was in the first batch of students) and Bethune College. She was married (1907) to Jayanta Rao, a well-known civil surgeon of Orissa. Her father-in-law Madhusudan Rao was a saintly poet-philosopher of Orissa, much revered and popularly called the "Bhakta-Kavi."

Sukhalata had thus grown up in the tradition of powerful intellect, and progressive outlook, high idealism and a national background. Her genius, by and large, derived largely from the social and intellectual milieu prior to and following her marriage. She began to exhibit an amazing feat of literary and artistic craftsmanship early in her life.

In another perspective too, one finds that in spite of a busy and crowded domestic life (her husband a top-ranking Government official, and she, a mother of half-a-dozen children) Mrs. Rao could

* Group Photo shows Sukhalata Rao seated next to Tushar Kanti Ghosh

find time to devote herself to literary and cultural pursuits which she maintained almost till the last days of her long life.

Her literary career commenced while she was still young, with poems and humorous stories for children written for her father's monthly "Sandesh". She was essentially a juvenile writer like her father and brother. Her first publication "Galper Boi" (1912), a book of Indian fairy tales, was written and illustrated by herself. This was the first book, written and illustrated by a woman, to be published in Bengal, if not in India! Several of her subsequent books (at least eight of them) were fine publications with illustrations all by the authoress. This was hailed as a unique performance on the part of a woman. They were her original story books in poetry and prose, first readers for children, books on hygiene, playlets, some written on scientific lines, and some on the models of English nursery rhymes.—Her facile pen and attractive themes readily appealed to impressionable minds.

Several of her exquisite poems, both for children and adults, have enriched a number of popular Bengali periodicals. Another poetical work "Panther Alo," a publication of her mature age (70) is based mostly on her personal experiences, and expressive of her profoundly spiritual perception.

Mrs. Rao's English writings, though few, are no less remarkable. Many years back, she wrote a book in English based on an Indian myth, titled "Behula" which, with a dozen illustrations of her own. It was appreciated by Rabindranath who heartily welcomed the book with his valuable introduction. Tagore wrote:

"Mrs Sukhalata Rao has caught in the web of her story the spirit of the village epic of Bengal. "Behula", which has sprung from the heart of our people and has lived in oral traditions and folk-lore, sung and performed by the local operatic troupes of this province. It gives us the picture of the ideal wife, her heroic sacrifice and conjures the atmosphere of housewife in its humble majesty, touching simple hearts with the beauty and depth of its sentiments.

"I feel sure that this English version of the story will find a large and appreciative audience."

In appreciation of Mrs. Rao's "Behula," the Editor of Modern Review Mr. Ramananda Chatterjee wrote inter alia: ". . . . The story is entrancing, and is told in a style which has a distinctness of its own. What adds to the charm and interest of the book is that the illustrations in colour are by herself. They are all noted for their purity and delicacy, and some, in addition, for the intensity of their pathos". Dr. Kalidas Nag made a notable review of this book in the same journal "Modern Review".

Yet another English book of hers is "Leading Lights", a volume of stirring and emotional poems. The poems are autobiographical, giving glimpses of personal experience, "full of tender and delicate touches of true poetry, bringing out forcefully the versatility of her genius in no uncertain manner".

Mrs. Rao was a talented artist. Her lines were powerful and she painted with great originality. Besides her own illustrations in her books, many of her excellent pieces had appeared in the two leading journals: "Prabasi" (Bengali) and "Modern Review". She was awarded a medal for her original landscape painting in oils at an All-India Art Exhibition. She had an ear for music and played the piano and violin with professional finish. Her dance productions executed by girl students mostly at Cuttack, were highly successful.

In her later years, honours were heaped on her in recognition of her signal service to juvenile

literature. She was awarded the President of India's Special prize (1951) for her book "Galpa ar Galpa" and five years after the Government of India's literature for children prize for another book "Neejey Sekho". Her "Nanan Desher Roopkatha" was one of the best entries in the Central Government Children's Book-Competition. She had been honoured with the "Bhubaneswari Medal" (1959) by the Sishu Sahitya Parishad, Calcutta.

Sukhalata Rao was elected Chairman, Reception Committee, at the first Cuttack session of Nikhil Bharat Banga Sahitya Sammelan (1952) of which the present writer was the Joint Secretary. Her address was a scholarly paper dwelling on Orissa's literary and cultural heritage and its living inspiration to a few leading Bengali litterateurs during their sojourns in historic Utkal, providing a happy fusion of intellects and cultures of the two States. "Literature plays a truly effective role in leading man on the high roads of life, wisdom and national integration," she said. Her utterance before the galaxy of writers and artists from all over India assembled under the presidency of Dr. Syama Prosad Mookerjee made an unforgettable impression.

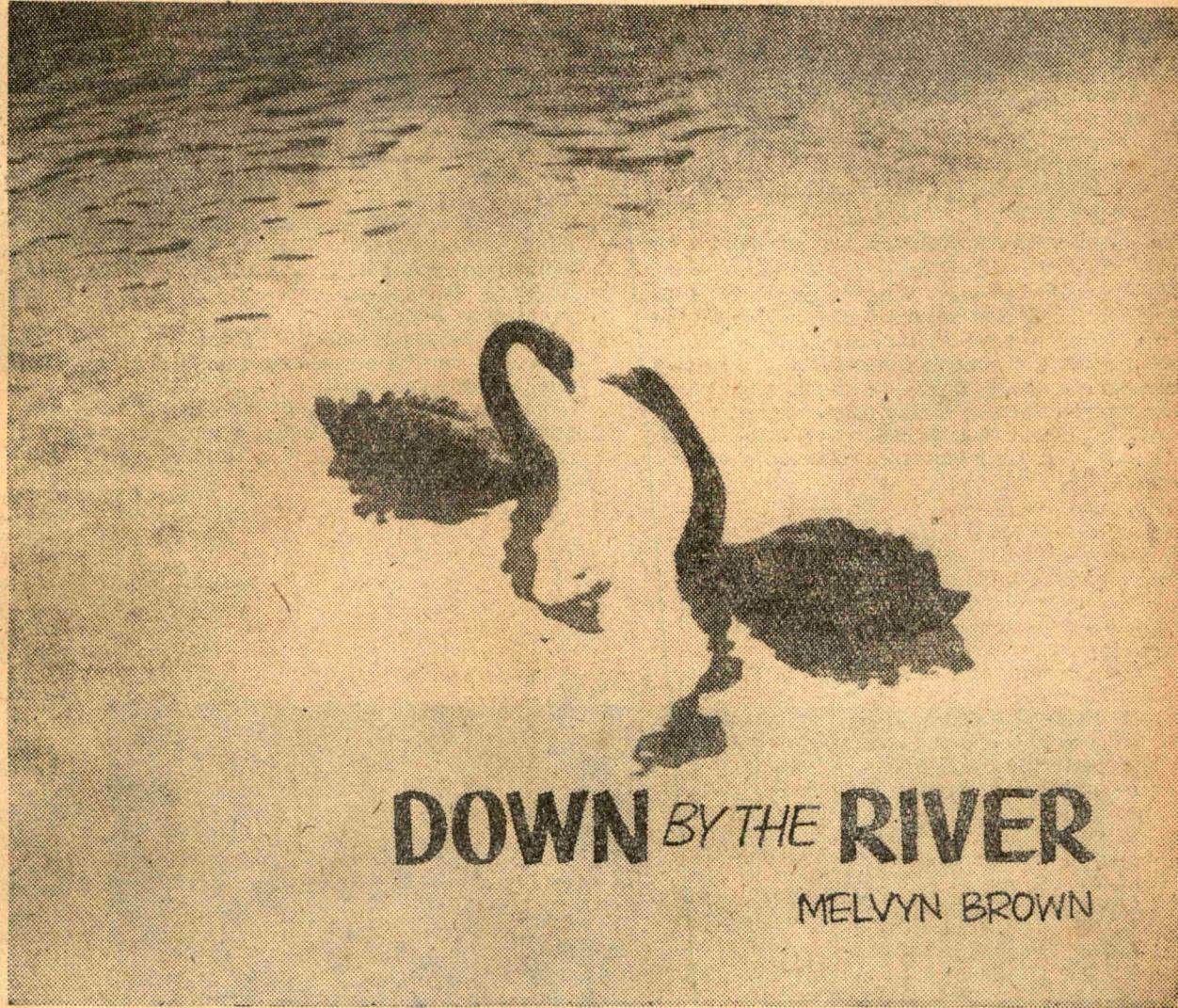
Since her marriage (1907), Mrs. Rao had been living with her Civil Surgeon husband mostly at Cuttack, and some times in Bihar towns. She ably edited a monthly journal "Alok" (1929) in English, Oriya and Bengali as an organ of the Bihar and Orissa Council of Women. Apart from her literary life, she was a well-known social worker at Cuttack, a Red Cross member and one of the founder-members of the Orissa Nari Seva Sangha. During World War II, her services to the sufferers among the Allied troops in the submarine attack of Orissa coast, were recognised by the then Government. She was awarded the "Kaiser-I-Hind" medal.

Through years of residence at Cuttack, Mrs. Rao identified herself with the life and language of the Oriya people. She wrote at least two Primary Children's books in Oriya: "Barna Parichay" and "Agey Para". At the instance of the Sahitya Akademi, she translated into Bengali the well-known Oriya novel "Matir Manush" by Mr. Kalindi Charan Panigrahi.

In the domestic sphere, Mrs. Rao had been an ideal housewife, mother and hostess to numerous friends and visitors at their residence which was always a picture of all-round elegance and cordiality pleasing any one who called on her and Dr. Rao. She had truly combined the ideals of home-making with their contributions to wider life and citizenship. I had many occasions of taking to her distinguished visitors to Cuttack. Among them was Patrika's Editor Mr. Tushar Kanti Ghosh. All left with unforgettable impression of Mrs. Rao and her husband. Finely matched, the couple were fascinating personalities, "quiet and unobtrusive, not seeking acclamation."

Family mishaps and bereavements beset their life. They could not slacken their spirits and mental strength. Both were ageing and never swerved from their superb spirituality. Dr. Rao (86) pre-deceased his wife by about 5 years. I have known Mrs. Rao in her late fifties, sixties, seventies and also as an octogenarian. Her eyes were still sharp, her mind as much keen and her heart as warm as ever. The brightness of her face and physical excellence were, however, visibly on the wane when I called on her last a few months before her passing. Probably with a premonition, she said, "My days are perhaps over." I took leave of her rather sadly. And the journey's end of a long and fruitful life came on the 9th day of July 1969.

*"God has you in His keeping,
We have you in our hearts!"*



DOWN BY THE RIVER

MELVYN BROWN



MEENA had a dream, and Meena did not believe in dreams. She woke the next morning still worried, as she had been these past two years, about Arjun Sen. Would he come back to her? Was it a quirk of fate that his train met with an accident and no trace of him was found or was it destined that she should lose him forever? In her dream he had returned to her. In her dream Arjun Sen seemed so real, so alive.

She pressed down the button on top of the alarm clock and the incessant ringing stopped. She yawned and stretched her aching body. The calendar on the table was still the 15th of October. Lazily she put out her hand and flipped the card to the 16th. Suddenly, as though Ned, she sat up. Today was the eve of the 16th.

Her mind raced back to other years and other eves. They had enjoyed themselves—Arjun and she, at the market, the movies, the restaurants

—at their favourite cove by the river. It was always there, watching the swirling waters, the river boats and the mangies, that they spoke and planned of a future they were certain was inevitable. Now, she couldn't help thinking of the cove.

Two years had been a long time. Yet, she remembered him as vividly as though only yesterday he had seen her. The same brown eyes, the dark hair, the slim shoulders and delicate mouth—it was all there before her in her mind's eye. Was he alive?—had he lost his memory as they sometimes do?—could it be possible he was remembering her this very moment?

"Wake up, lazy bones!" shouted Sheila, her friend and room-mate.

They had worked together in the same company ever since they had left school. Sheila was a tall girl, full of fun and always ready to please. Sometimes Meena wondered what she might have done had Sheila not been around—perhaps something foolish.

"I had a silly dream, you know," smiled Meena.

"Really, what about?"

"Arjun Sen. He came back to me!"

Sheila laughed.

"And you don't believe in dreams."

"For that matter you don't yourself," said Meena. "Nor do many others."

"Why don't you go out today and give some nice young chap a chance to admire you," put in Sheila.

"No. Today I must go to the cove."

"The cove! The cove!" snapped Sheila. "What's the purpose in tormenting yourself? Be practical, Meena, two years have gone by."

Meena smiled. She didn't expect happy-go-lucky Sheila to understand. Love was something only lovers know of. Meena got out of bed and began her usual morning rush. She decided to go to the market and pick up a present for Sheila, and, maybe buy herself a few things she needed.

"Don't forget Meena, you must help me decorate the house."

"All right—and remember, a helping hand with the food."

The New Market was filled to capacity with people. It seemed that most of them came to the market only once a year—at Puja time. Meena pushed her way through; selected an expensive cosmetic set for Sheila, and hurriedly left the place. It was a relief to be out in the open.

Taking a taxi, she directed the man to the ghats. The cool river breeze skirted around

her and she felt once again alone. The taxi had gone and she stood on the pavement uneasily. Sheila had been right, she mused, she ought to have gone straight home. The sadness had returned; the pain too, had renewed itself. *Arjun! Arjun!* her heart called out with an urgent voice: *My darling! My darling!*

Meena turned and frantically looked around for another taxi. She couldn't find one. Suddenly, she did not want to see the cove—not today. She walked with quick rapid steps down the deserted street. Then a jeep pulled up and a young woman and her husband called out to her.

"Could we give you a lift?" they asked.

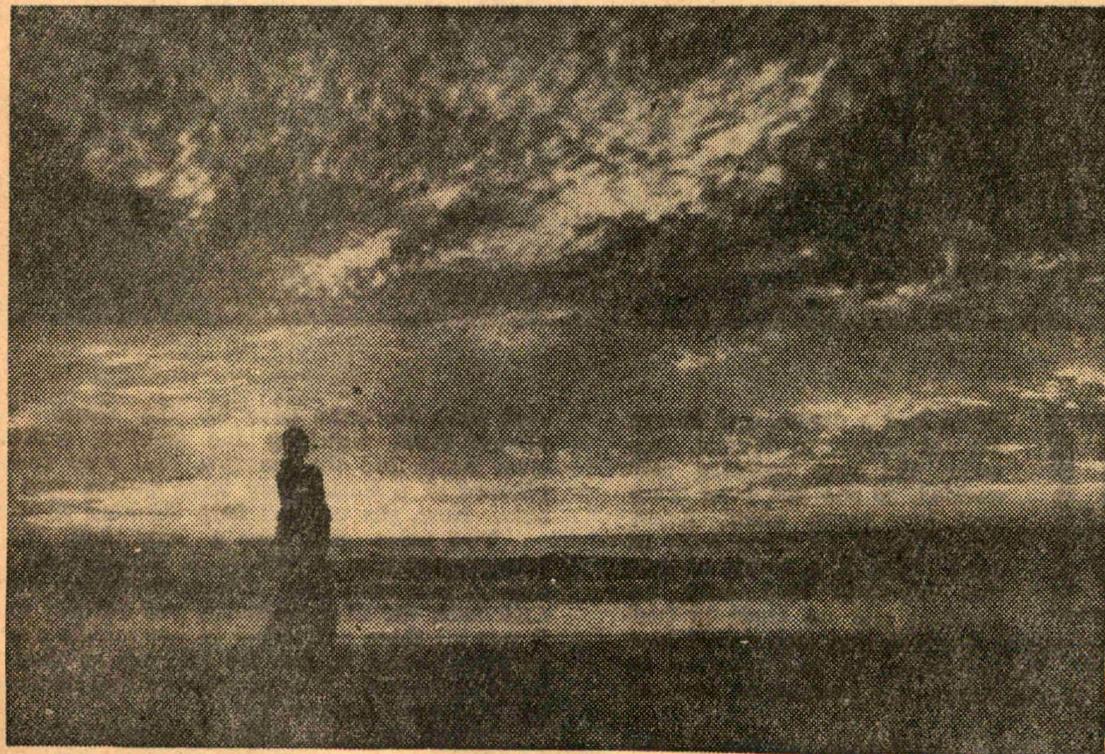
"Yes, Yes, please," she blurted, and got on.

"Where to?" inquired the young married woman.

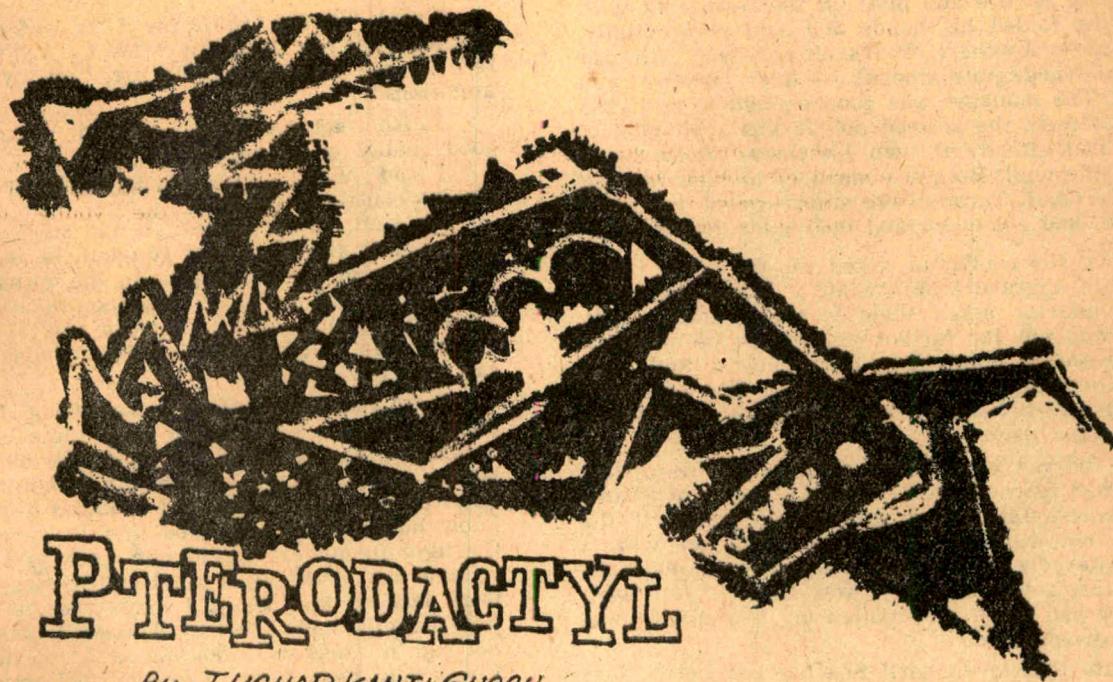
For a long while Meena could not reply. Her mind seemed fogged. She had forgotten where she wanted to go. The couple smiled and said consolingly: "It happens—when you're worried it happens—poor child."

The husband added: "Come on to our place for coffee, maybe our friend who is always so witty might cheer you up."

"Yes, please do come," put in his wife. "You must meet Arjun Sen. He is our guest—just recovered from the shock of a train accident."



SRILEN ROY



PTERODACTYL

By - TUSHAR KANTI GHOSH
W.B.C.S.



NE was likely to be cross at such an incident. All bad omens were looming since morning. I thought I would extend a helping hand to her when she literally fell down on the ground as she failed to board the running tram car; by that time her hands, legs, and her entire body had mingled into one. She got up by herself, but I picked up her scattered books and purse.

'Thanks', she said, and away she went.

I see. She wants to put an end to all flirtations. Alright. I also did not respond to her thanks by some courteous remarks demanded on such occasions. The next tram vanished into the straight line street.

I got a letter that mother was ill. The office desk was then loaded with filthy files. For many months I had not kept touch with mother! There was a loud hue and cry. Somebody was unconscious in the middle of the crowd. Could it be mother? I rushed. From afar two bare feet were visible looking like mother's. Oh God! I pushed and elbowed, but everybody looked at my face scrutinisingly. I covered my face with a handkerchief: I pushed and elbowed on, vehemently. They made a pathway for me automatically, and in no time I reached the centre of the crowd. Mother eyed me affectionately and said, "You will not love your mother during your happy times, when your mother is dying you all will rush to her!" I cried aloud and said, "No, no, mother, I adore you like my God everyday; don't say this." Mother also wept, then she took

me in her arms, and as she touched my head and fingered my hair softly, I fell asleep.

I was extremely thirsty. I felt my way and got up, but could not find the switch. Where is the switch? Where is the light? No, there was no switch—all the switches were lost in the darkness. There were some loose naked wires. If I touch them, I shall get a shock. Let me go without water for night. There is no harm if I do not quench my thirst for one night. Mother fasts for many a day, and does not take even a drop of water. But, then, how could I compare myself with mother? Yes, here is the switch, yes, here I feel the hard thing. As soon as I pulled the switch, the entire room was flooded with white light—she was lying prostrate, the baby clinging to her breasts. At once I switched off. I shall not drink water. There is no harm if I do not drink water for one night.

Probably I was asleep after that, or it might be that I just awoke from a nightmarish dream. Somebody had directed a powerful searchlight at my eyes. I got blinded. I searched for my handkerchief when the light was off. I reeled and fell down, unable to keep my balance. Jatish placed his hand on my back and said, "We are celebrating our retrenchment today." He and others of his company blasted into laughter. Looking back I found all the four in Jatish's party—Habla, Bhuro, Girish and Jatish. Only I could hear the words of Jatish, the uproarious laughter of the other three provided the background music. When I told them Gandhiji's views about means and ends, their laughter started. Hell, there can be no principle for the retrenched workers." One of them said, "Do you know this is my fourth retrenchment?" What I gathered

from them is that the four had gone to a restaurant, taken their heart's fill, and when the waiter brought the bill, Jatish smartly brought out his dot pen and wrote on the bill: "I promise to pay. . . ." The manager rushed to them. They all silenced the manager with a shout. When the manager learnt that they would set fire and blast off the restaurant with bombs, he folded his hands and said reverentially, "I am sorry, brothers. That's alright—you will pay this bill—negligible amount — later when you please." The manager was good enough to rush and bring for them the aniseed pot. It was a bit late for Bhuro had already thrown his three ounce bomb against the wall. Both the manager and his pot fell on the ground. Through the smoke-cover, the party of Jatish had got down and boarded a No. 2 bus.

When the conductor asked for the fare, they replied in a grave tone: "Staff". When the indiscreet conductor asked them to show staff cards, Bhuro was not for further arguments. he brought out the second bomb from his sleeves and just showed its purple covering of paper. The conductor now came to his senses and he made himself scarce in the upper deck.

He did not come down again until the double decker had reached the five-point crossing at Shambazar, where Jatish and his party got down, saying "We do not want to go to the moon or win a State lottery; what we need are some raw materials for making a few bombs." I was about to fall down from my bed when they pulled my hair and laughed and disappeared.

Again that lovely girl! She has completely forgotten that just a while back she fell down from the tram. She came menacingly close to me. She thought it was dark, nobody was near us. I looked away, coldly, and passed her. I looked back. She was weeping as she turned homewards. I laughed out heartily. This is called tit for tat.

No mother, don't be miserable for me! I want to love you, adore you, I want to show you new vistas. Mother, I shall not live to see you happy, but my sons will make you happy. I was shattered by partition, politics, ambitions and the endeavour to have the minimum for my wife and children. I love you, mother, I assure you, I love you. In 1967, after the General Elections, I thought that the prehistoric reptile had awakened at last from her slumber. It was the picture of a very large reptile—lying in slumber for centuries, with her enormous wings spread out, with weeds and birds' nests and molehills rising on her body. One day, the slumber was broken, she just waived her massive tail, and lo and behold! the big banyan trees, rotten at the roots, the molehills and all were blown under. Imagine, this is only her tail which was wagged to drive away the flies! If the reptile, with her stout legs, enormous tail, her huge body with big scales and her large and long prehistoric mouth like a pterodactyl stands up and roars, what then will happen? If she says, "My slumber is over, I am now awake," what then will happen? It suddenly dawned upon me that I am that pterodactyl. With a loud shriek I got up, really shattering the slumber of milady, who tidied herself and put on the light and brought me a glass of water. I quenched my thirst and resumed my bedlam.

I distinctly remember, when I was offered the full blossom of herself, I accepted it without any reservations. I quenched my thirst with gulps. But the next moment I cried out unconsolingly, unceas-

ingly. She cried in vain to press my face against her in order to console me, saying, "Why do you cry, dear, why do you cry?"

I stopped, but only for the time being. A moment after, I dreamt about that pterodactyl who beckoned to me often.

I said, "Please excuse me, I am tied down from all sides, by my beautiful wife, by my nice children, by my wooden service life, by my defeated ambitions."

Jatish read my palm and said, "You have a good chance of success."

I said, "Look, there are so many marks which signify constant struggles."

He said, "You possess all the signs of a great man, but in the sum total you will be nothing, because none of the qualities is in the optimum dose."

I cried out in utter disappointment. I said, "Jatishda, please tell me the way out!"

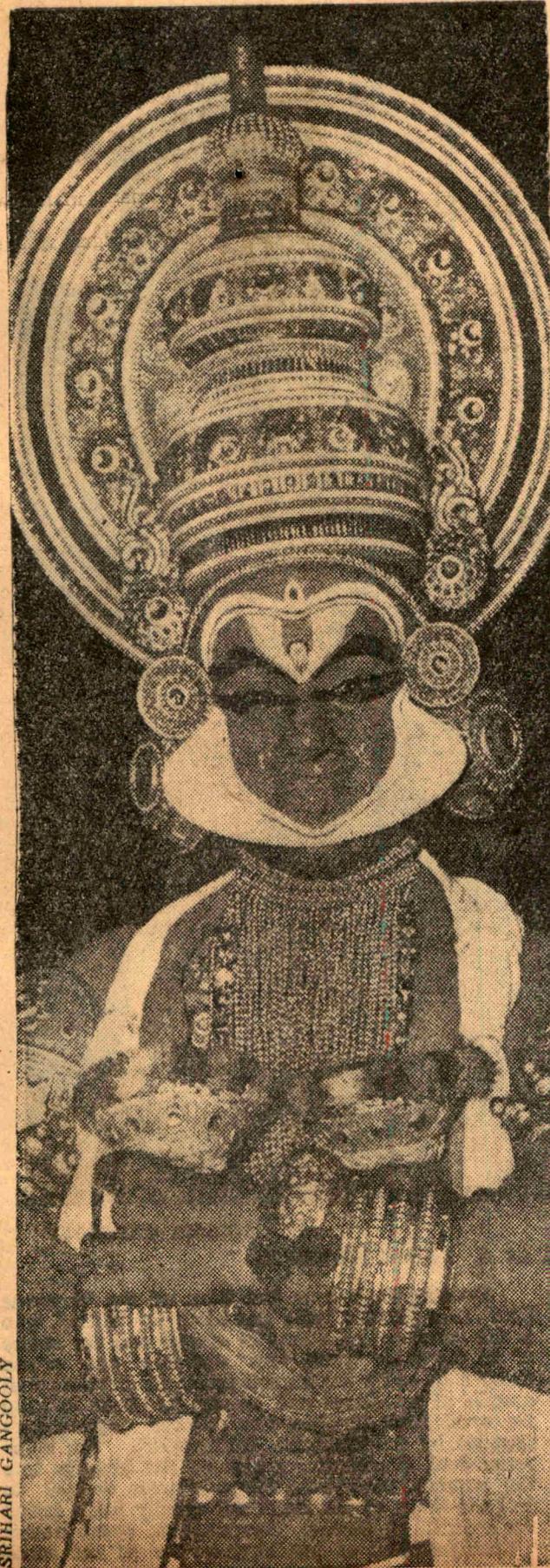
He said, "Come with me. From today, you will call me your guru."

I did not know where I was going. He led me along through a great many dark tunnels. He was holding a wax torch in his hand, the flames were yellow and shivering and shedding their dead shadows on our faces. Silently I followed him. I do not know how far we had gone in this way. Suddenly the light in my eyes went out. Looking at Jatishda I found his hands were hand-cuffed, two policemen were leading him away. I may also be arrested; this thought made me run. Though I tried, I could not run, my legs were floating as if in a moon-walk. I was cold with fear. The two policemen threw Jatishda into a big crater and put a boulder on the mouth and set it tightly. One of them brought out lumps of sealing wax from his bulging pocket, melted some of it against the flames, put it liberally on the boulder; then he got on the boulder and pressed the sealing wax with his boots. After a while he got down and stopped and saw whether the mark of his boots was well stamped on the boulder. The seal was very neatly done and the boot mark was distinctly visible. The policemen roared in laughter. Before they went away, they stood at attention and saluted in memory of Jatishda. They turned to me, but laughed at my shivering; instead of arresting me, they said, "Baby, you are a good boy, don't mix with these elements. You will get in trouble."

I said, "How shall I get out of this?"

They said, "Take a tram and go straight eastward."

I got the tram. I saw that girl who fell down from the tram. I did not pay any heed to her. I said to the conductor, "Please take me straight eastward." The conductor consulted the driver and they rang up somewhere. A gang of labourers wearing tram company uniform arrived. A new tramline will be laid. A new track will be made where there is none. All the passengers overheard my talk with the conductor and so everybody wants to go straight eastward. At every stop there was a heavy rush. Everybody will travel in the new track. The crowd inside was jammed together — somebody being trampled down, somebody pushing and somebody arguing—in total it was a great din. The tram car was rushing straight eastward, sounding the bells occasionally. I sweated profusely. Yet I was very happy. Mother was running her hands through my hair in the same soothing manner as she did when I was her little child. This time I really fell asleep.



SRIHARI GANGOOLY

J

T is not possible to put forward a materialistic interpretation of the history of Indian dancing. The reason obviously, is that it is not merely a history of the people or of the nation—but something more. Consequently its "language"—more precisely, expression—is partly distinct and partly not so. The medium of expression between 'time' and 'space' and between the 'eternal man' (the Purusha) and the 'eternal woman' (the Prakriti) is dancing. It is continuing from time immemorial. The primitive instinct (or inspiration) for creation which the 'eternal man' (the Purusha) and the 'eternal woman' (the Prakriti) have been acquiring through inheritance for generations finds expression in a superb combination of language (or music) and rhythm to form the foundation of dancing. The out-

TAPAN K. BANERJEE

**AN ASPECT
OF
INDIAN
DANCING**

ward expression of this latent idea is the saga of humanity and this superstructure of dancing. Indian religion (and philosophy) is based not only on pure reasoning or intellect or a few moral laws but it has also a close relationship with dancing. 'Moksha' or the celestial happiness (or pleasure) is the other term for the infinite joy (of creation) which is sought by the 'Yogis' through religion, by philosophers through philosophy and by the common men through art.

The 'eternal happiness' which has been described in the 'Vedas' and the 'Upanishads' is identical with what is derived from music and dancing and stretches itself in all the fields of thought and meditation, be it earthly or heavenly. One only requires a strong imagination to realise it. And he who realises it enjoys heavenly pleasure and God's blessings. Hence, Indian dancing is not merely an



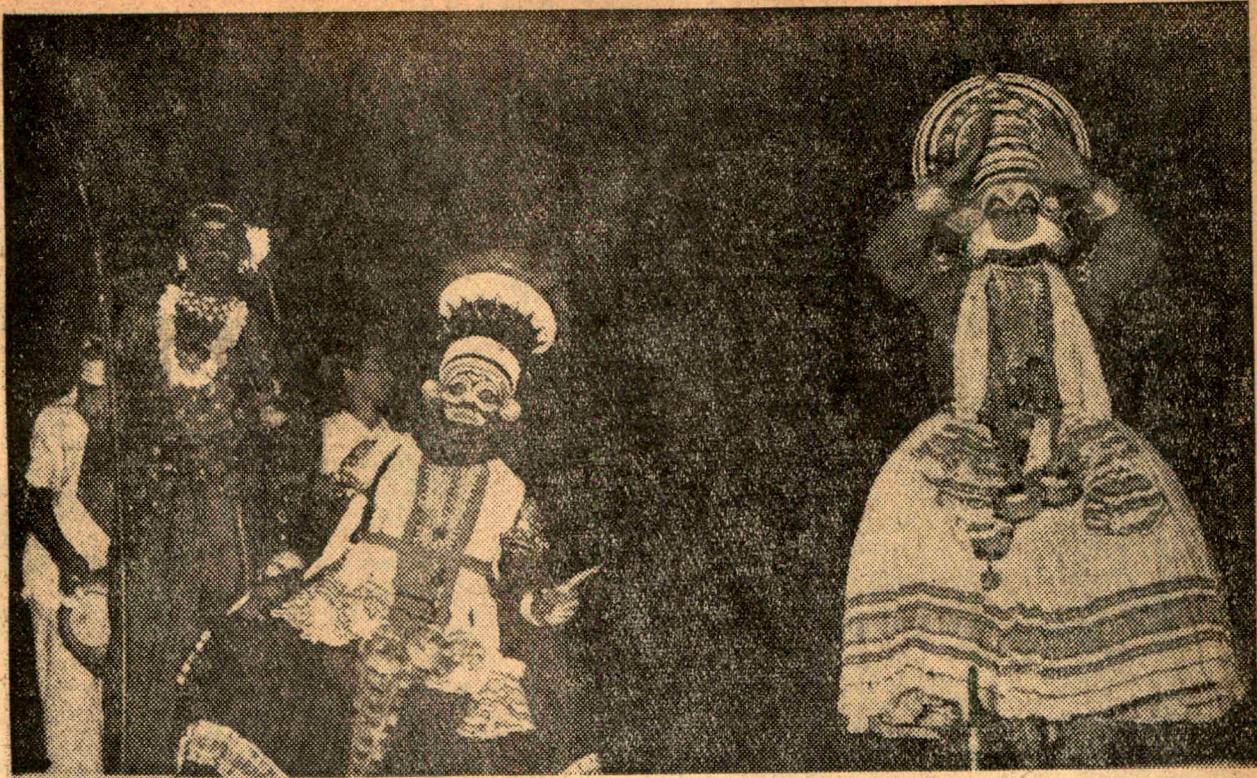
SRIHARI GANGOOLY

MANDODARI, RAVANA AND SITA IN A DANCE SEQUENCE.

outward expression of human ingenuity but it is also a manifestation of God's beauty and charm.

The other name of dancing is 'Yoga'. The greatest 'Yogi' Shiva is the pioneer in this art. The rhythm of creation sparked off from 'His' dancing steps—the uniformity of creation gradually took shape. The principal object of Yoga is to unify the body and the soul (Atma)—and dancing is one of the media for attaining the object. Dancing is, therefore, to be viewed not only as a form of physical exercise but as a work of a creative mind. It is for this reason that one of the ways of practising 'Yoga' is dancing.

Dancing represents the form of the 'Supreme Soul' (the Paramatma). The almighty 'Shiva', who is the source of all forms of energy and the centre of all forms of sound, that absolute one whose every step emits the superb music of creation, that apostle of manliness and beauty, has been dancing for ever. Lord Krishna also enjoyed dancing surrounded by the 'Gopinis' (milkmaids). The 'Supreme Soul (Paramatma) merged His identity into the common 'souls'—the 'Gopinis' were obliged to feel the touch of the Lord. All earthly being tasted the celestial pleasure. Bharata, the great hermit (Rhishi) served as the torch-bearer of the sup-



SRIKARI GANGOOLEY

BOTTOM: GOPINATH, A WELL KNOWN GURU OF KATHAKALI, DEMONSTRATING THE 'LOTUS' MUDRA.

ABOVE: A DANCE SEQUENCE FROM 'RAMA'.

rior art of dancing while bringing it down on this earth. In this way the dancing style of 'Shiva' or Nataraja (King of dancers) became popular.

Viewing from another angle, dancing like other forms of art originated and developed in ancient India. As a proof of this, the highly rich Indian dramas (Natya-Shastra) may be mentioned—wherein not only dramatic art but music, poems, sculpture and even aesthetics have been discussed. Indians liked to worship the 'Supreme Creator of all forms of art' through art itself. Obviously art occupies an important position in the sphere of religion (in India).

Famous Indian temples were the principal centres of architecture and sculpture. Ancient poets nicely utilised these to illustrate their visionary images. Philosophers created an atmosphere to nurse their delicate theories which subtly tells you the triumph of humanity. Dancers and musicians offered their talent in music and rhythm and youth at the feet of God. Music and dancing were not only the two of the modes of worship but these combined, constituted the most vital part of it. For this reason one may observe here a sublime form of celestial beauty which cannot be perceived by the sensual organs.

There is a story about the origin of dancing. Once, Bharata, the father of dancing and music, invented a new game for the enjoyment of gods. He displayed this newly invented 'game' before 'Shiva' and 'Parvati'. The Lord 'Shiva' was highly pleased with the performance and sent his chief dancer-disciple Tandu to Bharata for imparting more knowledge. The technique of dancing which Tandu learnt from Bharata came to be known as the 'Tandava' dancing. Simultaneously Usha, the grand daughter-in-law of Lord Krishna, the daughter of King Bana and wife of Aniruddha, started learning the technique of dancing for women which, afterwards came to be known as 'Lasya'. Usha herself taught the young girls of Dwaraka (situated in Saurashtra) this technique of dancing. Gradually dancing spread all over India from the centre of Saurashtra.

There is, however, a controversy on the role of Saurashtra in introducing dancing in India. Ne-

vertheless, there is enough evidence to show that dancing made considerable progress in India long before the 'Puranas'. As an example, the 'Rigveda' where there are several references to dancing may be mentioned. History also bears enough evidence. 'Arjuna' in the guise of 'Brihannala' was a dance-teacher in the house of the King of Birata. So, from such instances it becomes apparent that dancing, in those days, was a popular art and dance-teachers were held in high esteem. During the 'Vedic' period dancing was perhaps not recognised as an art but it had a place in festivals. However, discussion on dancing should not go beyond the days of Brihannala because history is silent here and does not help us much. The discussion on dancing made in the two 'Sutras' viz. 'Shilaliu' and "Krishasvin", in the grammar written by Panini' in the fourth century B.C. is known as the most ancient. The discourse on dancing in Bharata's 'Natya-Shashtra' is the most ancient criticism or comment on dancing. Prolonged discussion on dancing which is found in the Tamil book "Shilappadikaram" appears to be a contemporary work. Nevertheless, the origin of Indian dancing must be located in Bharata's 'Natya-shashtra'.

Of the authentic books on Indian dancing published so far the following deserve special mention—"Sangeet Ratnakar" by Sarangadeva, "Abhinaya Darpana" by Nandikeswar and "Dasharupaka" by Dhananjaya.

In ancient India only one style of dancing was predominant. With the passage of time different forms and styles came into existence through evolution. Gradually four principal styles of Indian dancing emerged from the prevailing atmosphere depending on the culture of the particular zone which they represent—Bharatnatyam, Kathakali, Kathak and Manipuri. Among these four principal styles Bharatnatyam is undoubtedly one of the oldest styles of Indian dance which holds a respectful position in the field of our ancient culture. It is intimately related to religion. The word Bharatnatyam has been derived from the Natya Shastra of Bharata. The home of Bharatnatyam is South India, to be more specific, the State of Madras which is also known as Tamil Nadu. This style of dance is associated with temple festivals which are held at regular intervals to celebrate special occasions. Dancing as an art is held so much in respect there that dance forms are used as decorative motif for temple. The beautiful paintings on friezes and figures both inside and outside most of the temples in South India show how much this art was respected in early times. And the inner mean-

ing of this art is to dedicate oneself at the feet of God. The famous and much talked of system of Devadasi with their devotional dances and dedicated life had its origin from this religious inspiration.

Kathakali originated in Kerala. It is a unique style of dance which has been eulogised as a marvellous combination of scientific dance, elaborate gestures, picturesque costumes, grand make-up and vigorous music. It had its birth in 15th century. However, it is hardly connected with any religious or philosophical idea. Rather it is related to the social and secular life of the people. This form of dance is completely based on drama.

Kathak, is also one of the most popular styles of Indian dancing. Though some critics hold that this form of dance came into existence during the Mughal period, in the 19th century this school attained maximum growth under the patronage of Wajid Ali Shah. The special feature of Kathak dance in its complicated footwork and the performance is judged by the skilful execution of bodily movements rather than emotion and quest for extra sensual beauty.

Manipuri is completely based on mythology. Because the people of Manipur are by nature pious and thus their arts and customs have been profoundly influenced by religion. The favourite dance of Manipur is Lai—Haraoba which means festivity of gods. It gained popularity and appreciation as one of the best dance forms in the eastern region of India about 11th century.

It must, however, be mentioned here that Indian Culture could not follow one uniform course for all time. Time and again the original course was choked. Foreign aggressions moulded the shape of Indian culture differently at different times. As a result, the outward shape changed at frequent intervals. These phenomena, however, failed to divert the original course in a totally different channel. Basically, the trend was uniform. This holds good in the case of dancing as well. It could not retain its original form and had to accept many changes. Modern Indian dancing is nothing but a changed version of the original one. But in spite of changes Indian dancing remains the same for ever—that is the quest for the celestial happiness which human senses fail to perceive. Even to-day it is continuing its search for that infinite pleasure which is brought by the perception of the extra-sensual beauty and realisation of the ever-lasting charm of the 'Parama Purusha' (God), which words fail to express.



TOWARDS A NON-VIOLENT REVOLUTION

ANNADA SANKAR RAY



LONG before the Revolution in Russia our leading thinkers were convinced that Social Justice was as much an end as Nationhood and Democracy. But they would not adopt revolution as a means to this or any other end. Legislation was the means they set before the people, unaware that there might be another means called Satyagraha.

Both Satyagraha and Revolution made an almost simultaneous appearance in Indian thought shortly before the 'twenties of the present century'. Gandhiji's object was to provide his countrymen with Social Justice along with National Freedom and Democracy, but with the fundamental difference that the means must be truthful and non-violent. Naturally, the means would influence the ends and make them different in the process of attainment. Thus a non-violent Swaraj would be different from a violent Swaraj, a non-violent Democracy from a violent Democracy, a non-violent Social Order from a violent Social Order.

While Gandhiji worked out his non-violent means and ends there were other important men and groups who pursued either constitutional or revolutionary ends and means. During the twenties young college students like me found ourselves torn between conflicting doctrines and policies. Everything looked plausible and worth trying. Many of us made a synthesis of violence and non-violence, revolution and reaction, constitutionalism and fascism, approving both Mussolini and Stalin.

The thirties made for clarity of thought. Not complete clarity, but comparative clarity. Most people preferred parliamentary democracy to fascism while panchayati democracy appealed only to a handful as a possible and desirable alternative. The violent revolutionaries gradually settled on a form of communism or socialism with an admixture of nationalism but far from parliamentary democracy or the constitutional way. Dictatorship was welcome provided it was their dictatorship, not of their opponents.

The Nation meanwhile went through a transformation. The Muslim League formulated its Two-Nation Theory, calling a community a Nation. This was in answer to the National Congress controlling as many as eight out of eleven provincial governments in the name of a composite Indian nation inclusive of Muslims. Non-violence had a resounding success at the polls after the failure of the civil disobedience movement, but its idea of parliamentary democracy was to allow the parliamentary sub-committee of the Congress Working Committee to exercise dictatorial control over the eight elected Governments of the people. As the shape of things became comparatively clear it appeared that no Satyagraha was needed for a fight over a class issue. The capitalists would become voluntary trustees of wealth produced by the workers by the sweat of their brow.

The forties were so full of blood and fury that Social Justice was put aside in most countries for the duration of the war. Afterwards the world got divided into two Power blocs in one of which there was violent revolutionary change and in the other a large measure of social democracy by the people's vote, but within the framework of capitalism. Full employment became a national responsibility whether the Government was in the hands of socialists or conservatives. The working classes acquired a degree of affluence undreamt of by Marx or Lenin. On the other hand, the economy became a veiled form of war economy with violence deeply entrenched as a permanent answer to communism the world over.

In the Communist countries drastic steps had to be taken by dictatorial methods to catch up with capitalist progress and to withstand their attack which was daily apprehended. Life was denuded of liberty. There were hardly enough consumer goods to go round. Nevertheless, it became evident that if war broke out the Communists would not be so decisively beaten as the fascists. They stood for something just as important as Democracy. It was Social Justice of a sweeping nature which did not

consist in more private wealth for the little man but a rise in his stature as the man who mattered.

India which eventually attained divided nationhood, independence and parliamentary democracy was deeply concerned with ends and means as no other country. In her the Western liberal traditions of more than a century mingled with Gandhian non-violent traditions with their identification with the poor, the hungry, the dispossessed. She could not belong to the capitalist bloc where ultimate power rested with those who had ultimate control over private wealth, nor to the Communist bloc where violence had come to stay along with dictatorship of a single party.

It was not enough to save her soul from either capitalist war economy or Communist dictatorial violence. It was urgently necessary to express some concern for her very existence which depended on a resolute pursuit of Social Justice. This is what kept Gandhian workers like Vinoba Bhave constantly on the move. What they aimed at was a social revolution by consent. It was without precedent in history. They deserve credit for performing a minor miracle by methods of pure persuasion unaided by the State and without recourse to Satyagraha. But

I would not call it a major miracle because it has neither transformed the class relations nor weakened the owning class nor strengthened the poor and the dispossessed.

A distinction has to be made between a revolution by consent and a non-violent revolution. The former proceeds only by change of heart of the owning class, while the latter puts some fight into the producers and consumers, teaches them to resist and leads them non-violently towards an agreement which is fair to both sides. But no one today is prepared for a struggle on non-violent lines and there is no leadership which is ready to accept responsibility for it. The result is that apart from what our social democrats are doing in the legislatures the field is free for violent activities of fanatical believers in class war. Inevitably, there is counter-revolution to match revolution. If the mainstream which is social democratic in a mild form loses its race with time the future carries a threat of Communist-fascist battle, unless the Gandhians come forward to lay down their lives for a just order of society, followed by little men who know how to resist without violence.



A TREK TO PINDARI GLACIER

BIRESWAR P. BANERJI



Y wife was able to climb right up to the glacier."

"Mr. A, one of our companions, walked straight up the glacier on a ridge . . . where a step faltering by so much as a hair's breadth would end life in this uncertain world of ours."

"The chowkidar and a coolie took me to the glacier and they told me that I had climbed higher than anybody so far."

These are some random entries in the Log Book of the Dak Bungalow at Phurkia, the last Rest House en route to the Pindari glacier. It was in the afternoon, 21st October, 1961, and the last entry in the register bore our signatures and a brief description of the achievement of our successful expedition to Mt. Nandakhat (21,690 ft.) which broods over the neck of the glacier just 5 miles away.

The weather outside the rest house was far from commendable, if not quite threatening and we were in a hurry to climb downhill some 10 miles to the Rest House at Khati which, however, we could not ultimately reach that evening. We nevertheless appreciated the informative notes in the log book on geology and mountaineering, flora and fauna, the romantic adventures of 'heroes among trekkers' and doses of some mischievous humour:

*"This question of the snout,
Should be cleared without doubt,
For the benefit of those,
Who like a clean nose."*

Situated as it is in the Almora district of Uttar Pradesh, Pindari is one of the most accessible and at the same time one of the finest of the Himalayan glaciers. I had for a long time nursed a secret desire to visit the ice. The opportunity, however, came during the Puja holiday in 1961 in the form of a successful mountaineering expedition. Ever since the time of the completely successful Bengali expedition to Mt. Nandaghunti (20,700 ft.) in 1960, some of my friends had expressed the desire to organise

such an expedition to the Himalayas in spite of our very limited resources with which we could not even pay a few Sherpa porters. We chose Mt. Nandakhat in the Kumaons reconnoitred the previous year by our leader. The problem of collecting climbing gear having been solved, thanks to the timely assistance of The Himalayan Club, three of us started from Calcutta while four others had already proceeded from Delhi a few days earlier for the mountains. This narrative will, however, be limited to our trek to Pindari glacier where we had eventually set up our base camp.

Our journey initially took us to Kathgodam by rail and then by bus on to Almora, the district H.Q. and a fairly big hill station, where we spent the night in the Tourist Office. We reached Bageshwar the next day, a journey of 62 miles by bus over winding hill roads passing through the sparsely wooded Kosi and Someshwar Valleys with their terraced cultivation, the picturesque hill station of Kausani where Swami Anand and Sarlabehn, the noted Gandhians, had set up their abode. We saw the pretty little hamlet of Garur which had been the starting point of so many earlier expeditions of renowned mountaineers and the almost abandoned old temple town of Baijnath on the Sarju which I had an occasion to visit earlier. We reached Bageshwar in the afternoon and stopped overnight in the Rest House. We were to go next morning by the same bus upto Kapkote, another 14 miles, from where the trek to the glacier would begin.

Early the next morning we left Bageshwar, a flourishing little town at the confluence of Gomati and Sarju (not the rivers of the same name in the plains), where scores of old temples were dedicated to Shiva, the most famous being that of Bagnath, a 15th century edifice by the Katyuri King Lakshmi Chand of Kumaon. We had earlier been familiar with the description of Bageshwar from the book of Mr. Tilman, the noted British mountaineer, who visited this place in 1937 with Mr. Odell, another noted climber, while returning from their successful expedition to Mt. Nandadevi (25,645 ft.), the highest in the then British Empire.

The road ran parallel to the Sarju and very

soon we reached Kapote in time for breakfast. We found out that this whole stretch of road was built by the 'Shramdan' or voluntary labour of local villagers. The village of Kapote looked greener than the Kosi and Someswar valleys—probably it experienced more annual precipitation and had a smaller population.

WORMS AND LEECHES

At Kapote we had to hire some porters to carry our luggage, about half a ton of it; from here the trek of 36 miles to the Pindari Glacier. We had already appointed two high-altitude porters and they led us from the village of Loharkhet 10 miles uphill. Our trek from Kapkote started on the 16th October in pouring rain that took us into jungles full of worms and leeches. Rain has always been a good omen for us climbers in the trekking stages and we pressed on merrily while the train of porters brought up the rear. Though explored by venturesome tourists in the season until September, (dak-bungalows occur at regular intervals) the road was almost deserted throughout our journey at this time of year. After about a mile the road forked, one track leading north to Mansiari toward the Milam Valley while the other left-hand track went to Pindari. We took the latter, which after crossing the Sarju now headed uphill to the Dhakuri Ridge 14 miles away and 5000 ft. higher up. The ascent was, however, gentle at this stage. We passed en route a natural cavern with hanging stalactites and presently came upon a little plateau where the old dak-bungalow of Loharkhet stood beckoning us for the night's rest.

Early the next morning we started again after eating a light breakfast. Our first object was to reach the Dhakuri dak-bungalow on the far side of the ridge beyond the Dhakuri Pass at 9,300 ft. and five miles from Loharkhet. Inquisitive riff-raff from the nearby village mobbed us with innocent amusement and bade us farewell as we headed for the pass high above the clouds drifting in the valley below. Our way zig-zagged through dense forests of oaks, willows and cypresses sprinkled with chirrs and other conifers. Presently we passed by the Bhotia village of Chaura, where the houses nestled on precipitous slopes and which incidentally was the home of two of our high-altitude porters.

We climbed steadily up but the steep climb knocked us out very soon again. The meandering stream became a silver thread away below and the prospect of climbing another 4000 ft. over a horizontal distance of only 5 miles was far from encouraging. All along, the path snaked its way tormentingly affording no place for pause or rest. Even at these great heights, the forests, however, resounded with cacophonous monkeys and joyous birds of different species and colours.

During the last stages of the ascent the way became still more tortuous and strewn all over with rubble testifying to lashing rain and consequent landslides. We were nearly at the end of ourselves as we scrambled up in some fashion to finally make the pass which we did not recognise at first. The entry on our side was unattractive hidden by tall trees on either side of it. To add to our dis-enchantment the promised grand-stand view of the Himalayan ranges from the top was denied us as the clouds lay hanging over the Sundardhunga Valley. The deep Pindari and Sundardhunga Valleys yawned like the abyss itself from this height. We reached the Dhakuri dak bungalow after a steep descent of a mile or so, where the chowkidar treated us to a hearty lunch.

Situated at an altitude of 8600 ft. in a fresh

clearing of chir forest the dak bungalow at Dhakuri is perhaps one of the most picturesque in the Ku-maons and commanding a view which may very well be compared with those at Kausani and Gwaldam. It directly faces the snow peaks ranging from Nandaghunti in the north-west to Nandadevi and Nandakote in the north-East in a semi-circular panorama. We had, however, been favoured with this view on our return journey from the mountains. After lunch and some rest we had to pack up again and proceed a further six miles, now a steady and pleasant descent through a forest thickly carpeted with fallen leaves of chir and Deodar, before we could reach the dak-bungalow at Khati to call it a day. It was the last village on the route which was fairly big. The rest house perched on a cliff overlooking the Pindar Glacier which formed a little gorge here and its rumblings, of an express train, passing through a tunnel, never forsook us for a moment.

The next morning we started from Khati very early. Passing through a dense forest of maples the road nearby descended to the river bed. An expected view of the Kafini peak at the head of the little gorge due east of us was as usual denied by clouds and we went ahead, side-tracking a charming little waterfall, the first so far, en route to the rest house at Dwali on a rocky prominence at the junction of the Pindari and Kafini gorges. We had trekked 7 miles in the morning and took rest and lunch in the rest house. From Dwali onwards we faced again steady ascents through dense birch forests. We also trod many fields of alpine flowers and creepers. Rhododendrons were a constant source of joy during this portion of the trek of 3 miles as were numerous waterfalls. The valleys was becoming broader and we reached Phurkia, the last Rest House on the route, to have some well-earned rest.

Our intention was to camp on the glacier itself and we were well equipped with the requisite camping and climbing gear. We, therefore, pressed on to the camping ground at Martoli, 4 miles away, on the mountain slopes. This part of the route was quite devoid of any vegetation and involved a steady ascent for about 3 miles. We passed over several snow drifts which are likely to become slippery and dangerous during the rains, after which it was all bare snow. We had to trudge in the soft granular snow of a neve or vast snow field for a mile or so before we came upon a little pasture which was presently covered with thick snow, relics of an unusually heavy fall last winter. We were exhausted after the strenuous groping in the snow and were eagerly looking for a camping site when we sighted two shepherds' huts, low structures of rubble with slate roofing, from whence some other members of the party were waving a warm reception. These huts are generally used by shepherds when they come here to graze their sheep and goats in the summer. Our jubilation knew no bounds when we found the huts really comfortable for our purpose complete with piles of straw inside for beds.

Soon we were at home with our new surroundings and though some of us were suffering from glacier lassitude the spirit could on the whole be kept high only by drawing their attention to the superb scenery around us. Gradually, however, the sky became overcast and it began raining Hail and thundershowers. And by evening it was pitch-dark outside and freezing even inside the hut. At every flash of lightning and thunder I got the eerie sensation of a cobweb on my face, known as St. Elmo's Fire caused by electrical fields on exposed heights and which I had occasions in the Garhwal and Kash-

mir Himalays to experience. But nothing happened. Very soon, of course the sky cleared, as is usual in the mountains and peaks glistened in brilliant moonlight. We had taken early our dinner of canned mutton soup and flattened bread baked over a stone oven in the Tibetan way and curled cosily into our sleeping bags. Sleep was, however, out of the question: the cold and hard breathing were agonising in the rarefied atmosphere of our great height.

HEAVENLY SIGHT

The next day dawned fine. It was, in fact, one of the most gorgeous mornings I have ever enjoyed in the Himalayas. Fleecy clouds were sailing lightly across the asure sky and the gentle breeze, if nippy, was definitely appealing to the mountain lover. We were about 500 feet above the muddy rivulet and all around us were fields of white snow whose brilliance was increasing with the rising Sun. The site of the base camp commanded a magnificent view of the mighty peaks of Nandakhat (21,690 ft.) with its neighbour Bauljuri, both sisters of the great Nanda Devi (25,645 ft.). Our adversary stood wrapped in serenity facing us on the opposite bank, with its beautiful silvery dome of sheer ice overlooking the entire valley while Bankatya, the sister peak of Nandakot (22,510 ft.) loomed east, at our back, at the head of its glacier. It was a heavenly sight with the icy pyramids in front changing their hue from subdued crimson to pale orange and finally to silvery white with the first rays of the Sun. The scenery simply beggared description.

Late in the morning two of us, accompanied by a high-altitude porter, started for Trail's Pass at the base of the glacier to have a closer look in order to enable us later to pitch a camp below the pass to support the main climbing party for Mt. Nandakhat. We had to struggle up the snow fields and presently stumbled upon a pillar set up by the Geological Survey of India on one of their surveys in the area. We then crossed with agonising care a narrow side glacier, the bed of which was a chaos of boulders of all sizes. These were torn down into a jumble of medial moraine of the Pindari Glacier. We had to scramble up on to stony ledges on the far side and then began a steep ascent up slanting fields of hard snow. We were heaving hard, but still we laboured higher. We were roped for safety so that we should not slip down the snow to the glacier bed hundreds of feet below.

We reckoned our height to be in the region of 16,000 feet and overlooking the lower ice fall (a chasm of snow in the upper reaches of a glacier). There was no point in advancing any further. On the far side the upper portion of the Pindari Glacier was sloping from the Trail's Pass, a saddle 17,700 feet high, where the ridges of the surrounding peaks of Nandakhat and Nandakote converged. The glacier,

heavily crevassed, plunged thousands of feet below in two series of giant icefalls, resembling huge cascades of water, frozen as if by magic, down to the tunnel-like mouth from where gurgled muddy water. We were spellbound by the spectacle of a stream's origin—by grand nature. We enjoyed to our hearts content the monumental scene. Our enchantment was, however, broken by the head porter who advised us to return to camp early, and it was already after-noon. We had to climb down a long way. We reached camp by evening.

That evening was passed in great jubilation in the camp as one of the members with a porter had the same day been able to attain to the summit of Mt. Nandakhat. We devoured an account of the adventure late into the night around the camp fire, fully satisfied with our achievement and support to the climbers. We had, however, been favoured throughout by good weather so essential to victory in the hills.

HOMEWARD JOURNEY

The next morning we packed up and started on our homeward journey. We left this paradisal Himalayan sanctuary after having a last look at the icy spires of Nandakhat, Bankatya and the upper icefall of Pindari. Phurkia was reached very soon. The remarkable first ascent was duly recorded in the log book at the bungalow there. The chowkidar was obliged to admit that no trekker had ever penetrated the glacier as far as we had. And he served us a well-prepared meal. We were anxious to reach Khati that evening, and so we resumed our journey by and by.

That evening, however, we could proceed upto Dwali, a distance of only 3 miles. Our porters have a story here. They had spotted a stray goat on a steep precipice—a straggler given up by the goat-herds for lost. The porters flushed the animal which bolted only to crash and be caught eventually by its pursuers. After all, the creature would surely have died in this wilderness in winter and could be regarded as a benign gift of Nanda Devi to our porters, they argued. They had their fill of mutton roast that night with full co-operation of the keeper of the Rest House.

The next day we reached Dhakuri by noon; we had simply galloped downhill. We lolled in the bungalow the whole day in pleasant idleness, finished our diaries and sang songs in merriment. We had a splendid view of the Maiktoli range from above the Dhakuri pass the next morning. This was our last view of the snow-capped Himalayas. That day we started on our way to Ranikhet by bus from Kapkote after a touching farewell from the porters with whom a bond of comradeship had in the meantime grown up. Thus ended our fascinating journey to the headwaters of a noble stream in the Himalayas.

To George Bernard Shaw, the Elizabethans were "shallow literary persons, drunk with words.....and wallowing in blood, violence, muscularity of expression..." Of Shakespeare he believed that if "the fellow had not been a great poet his rubbish would have been forgotten long ago". Of himself he said that he was not conceited. "It is only a pose to prevent the people from seeing that I am serious. If they did, they would make me drink hemlock." SUBHRANSU MUKHERJI examines the penetrating wit that made,

GBS—THE ETERNAL REBEL



HAW wrote in his last days: "Whether it be that I was born mad or a little too sane, my kingdom was not of this world: I was at home only in the realm of my imagination, and at my ease only with the mighty dead." It was one of those revealing personal utterances that Shaw rarely allowed himself to make. Yet, paradoxically, no artist belonged to this world more momentously, more furiously, or rocked it more violently. For Shaw took the world by storm, and spared no pains to shock it into sanity. And he did so mainly in two ways: with the Shavian Theatre, and, to use the phrase in its best and special sense, with Shavian 'theatricality'—the 'theatricality' of G.B.S.!

That 'theatricality' is a fantastic world of its own where Shaw was, indeed, at once too sane and too mad: a world of devastating wit and railery, of sardonic humour and satire, sparkling with inexhaustible gaiety and *jeu d'esprit*, iridescent with strangest fancy glowing with the absurd—a bewildering, exasperating, fascinating world.

"Shaw's characters," Chesterton said once, "may or may not survive the test of time. But of one thing I am certain: Time and Oblivion can never bedim the lustre of the greatest character he created—G.B.S." Time perhaps will bear out the prophetic Chesterton. Many of Shaw's plays have dated. Many of his characters, like flashing meteors, once illumined the literary horizon, to follow "the primrose way to the everlasting bonfire." But the image that he has left to posterity of his own self—the provoking, astounding, infinitely charming G.B.S.—has defied time.

That image—a devastatingly original, boldly rebellious image towering against the cant, the hypocrisy, the strait-laced morality of the Victorians—has too often been distorted, misunderstood. For never has literature witnessed a personality more enigmatic. Shaw himself gave away his secret to Henderson with disarming candour: "When I first began to promulgate my opinions," he said once, "I found that they appeared extravagant, even insane. In order to get a hearing, it was necessary for me to attain the footing of a privileged lunatic, with the licence of a jester. Fortunately, the matter was very easy. I found that I had only to say with perfect simplicity what I seriously meant,.....to make everybody laugh..... And all the time the real joke is that I am dead earnest." With incisive socio-psychological insight, Shaw had grasped a vital truth: "You may shock or irritate people into believing anything so long as you know how to say it." "Startling, astounding, irrepressible," writes Henderson, "he fights for opposition, clamours for denial .. Call me disagreeable, only call me something' demands Shaw, 'for then I will have roused you from your stupid torpor.'"

The classic instance of Shaw's genius at being "positively disagreeable and irritating" in his *Shakespearean Bull-baiting*. For sheer impudence and intrepidity, for reckless flippancy and self-conceit, for that baffling art of blending: mockery and levity with seriousness, Shaw's crusade against Shakespeare remains incomparable, unique. Coolly, deliberately, with astounding aplomb, Shaw was deriding Shakespeare and putting Ibsen and himself above him!

Shaw's devastating attack was first directed to the Elizabethans whom he summed up as:

Shallow literary persons, drunk with words,



and seeking in crude stories of lust and crime an excuse for wild excitements." He went on to define an Elizabethan as :

A man with an extraordinary and imposing power of saying things—with nothing whatever to say. Artistically, they had 'delirium tremens'. The true Elizabethan was a blank-verse beast, itching to frighten other people with superstitious terrors and cruelties....and wallowing in blood, violence, muscularity of expression....

The withering attack continues and soon concentrates on Shakespeare :

Unfortunately, Shakespeare dropped into the middle of these ruffianly pedants....In such a school of falsehood, bloody-mindedness, bombast and intellectual cheapness, his natural standard was dragged down, as we know to our cost. Shakespeare had discovered that the only thing that paid in the theatre was romantic nonsense, and that when he was forced by this to produce one of the most effective samples of romantic nonsense in existence—"As You Like It"—he disclaimed any responsibility for its pleasant and cheap falsehood by....throwing it in the face of the public with the phrase. 'As You Like It'!...Shakespeare's enormous command of word-music gives fascination to his most blackguardly repartees, and sublimity to his lowest platitudes....You only find death made sensational, despair made stage-sublime, sex made romantic, and barrenness covered up by sentimentality and the mechanical lift of the blank verse....Having concluded that 'life's but a poor player' etc., he deeply impressed a public which, after a due consumption of beer

and spirits, is ready to believe that everything maudlin is tragic, and everything senseless is sublime."

He concludes with levity even more shocking:—

If the fellow had not been a great poet, his rubbish would have been forgotten long ago....An 'Eskimo' would have demanded his money back if a modern author offered him such fare (As You Like It):

A boorish, bounderly piece of Shavianism many would furiously call it. But then, that was part of the inscrutable Shavian technique: the king of jesters abandons himself to his antics—you laugh with him or you fume against him while unconsciously you absorb the fantastic truth in the patterns that he weaves so masterfully. Shaw would occasionally drop hints about his unique role. Whimsical Walker, the celebrated circus clown, was once introduced to Shaw after a circus show. "It is very nice of you to shake hands with an old clown" said Walker. "It is just one old clown shaking hands with another," Shaw replied with a sardonic grin. On another occasion he remarked: "It is my business to introduce a joke and knock the solemn people out of their perch....They used to laugh when I was serious; but now....they take off their hats when I joke, which is still more trying."

Shaw's adversaries—and they were a legion—charged him furiously with insufferable conceit, even stark insanity. Shaw's reply was typical: "No, I am not really conceited. It is only a pose, to prevent the people from seeing that I am serious. If they did, they would make me drink the hemlock." But it is in reply to the latter charge that we find the incomparable Shavian art of turning the tables: "I have not yet ascertained the truth

about myself," he wrote. "For instance, am I mad or sane?... At all events, if I am sane, the rest of the world ought not to be at large." Henderson makes a delightful comment on Shaw's madness: "If he (Shaw) had been matched in argument with the greatest living critic of the arts—and he was, frequently—he would doubtless have said to him in the language of the apocryphal anecdote: 'All the world's mad save thee and me, John. And sometimes I think thee's a little mad too!'

The rebel and iconoclast Shaw took up arms against every form of Victorianism. He was ever deeply concerned about the dismal Victorian school. Late in life, he was approached to help the school in the village he once lived in. Shaw reported to his biographer, Hesketh Pearson:

As the school kept the children quiet during my working hours, I did not, for the sake of my own personal convenience, want to blow it up with dynamite, as I should like to blow up most schools.

He was requested by the Headmistress to give two prizes for the best-behaved boy and girl. Shaw continues:

On reflection, I offered a handsome prize for the worst-behaved boy and girl on condition that a record be kept of their subsequent careers and compared with that of the best-behaved, in order to ascertain whether the school criterion of good conduct was valid. My offer was refused.

The world knows today the great dramatist that he was. But few know the great speaker he was, and fewer are aware of the Spartan training he had for twelve years on the average, three times a week at every conceivable place—street-corners, market squares, Hyde Park. Shaw's first reported public speech in January 1885, before the Industrial Remuneration Conference as a representative of the Fabian Society, is a classic:

It is the desire of the President that nothing shall be said that might give pain to particular classes. I am about to refer to a modern class—burglars—and if there is a burglar present, I beg him to believe that I cast no reflection upon his profession. I am not unmindful of his great skill and enterprise; his risks, so much greater than those of the most speculative capitalist, extending as they do to risks of liberty and life. Nor do I overlook his value to the community as an employer on a large scale, in view of the criminal lawyers, policemen, gaol-builders etc. who all owe their livelihood to his daring undertakings....

Shaw never accepted a farthing as his fee for the lectures he delivered. He knew very well "that those who pay the piper call the tune". He meant to call the tune himself and took care to be both paymaster and piper. An intriguing episode bears out Shaw's wisdom in refusing to be a hired speaker. Shaw himself records the incident:

At the election of 1882, I was making a speech at Dover, when a man shouted to the audience not to listen to 'a hired speaker' from London. I immediately offered to sell my emoluments for £5. He hesitated. I came down to £4 £3 £2.... At last I offered to take 5s—half-a crown—a shilling-six pence for my fees.

When he still refused, I claimed that he knew perfectly well that I was there at my own expense.

Such lightning repartee and remarkable presence of mind were Shaw's natural gifts. He was

never silenced, never out-witted, never at his wits' end. Once he was speaking on Flogging as a Punishment at the Fabian Society. After the speech, a clergyman got up and asked challengingly: "In the army many men guilty of misdemeanour ask to be flogged. What has the Lecturer to say to that?" Came the devastating reply from Shaw: "The subject of my lecture, ladies and gentlemen, was Flogging as a Punishment not Flogging as a Luxury!"

As intriguing, stormy chapter in the history of the Fabian Society began when H.G. Wells joined it. He was the 'Young Turk' perpetually drawing sword against the 'Old Gang': the Webbs, Bland, Walls and, above all, Shaw. Wells often fumed and blustered and lost his temper. Shaw, on the contrary, was ever cool and poised. "At last," to quote Pearson, "the fateful day came when Fabius was to encounter the militant Scipio in a pitched battle." Wells was spoiling for a fight and made a fiery speech denouncing and accusing the 'Old Gang'. But the unpredictable Shavian technique caught him on the wrong foot. Cool and smiling, "Shaw was easing the situation with the oil of comedy":

Mr. Wells in his speech complained of the long delay by the Old Gang in replying to his report. But the exact figures are: Wells ten months, the Old Gang six weeks. Of course, during the Committee's deliberations, Mr. Wells produced a book on America — and a very good book too. But whilst I was drafting our reply, I too produced a play."

Shaw paused. For several moments his eyes hovered vacantly around the walls and ceiling. He seemed to have lost his line of thought and speech. Everybody wondered; some began to fidget uncomfortably. At last he resumed:

Ladies and gentlemen, I paused, and for long, to enable, Mr. Wells to say, 'And a very good play too.'

Pearson concludes, "The audience shouted with laughter, burst following burst. Wells smiled self-consciously. Shaw sat down. Fabius had won."

Later in life, Shaw would concentrate his long and bitter experiences as a perpetual committee-man in a letter to a friend. Shaw's experiences are condensed in a staring of 'ifs':

If you are invincibly patient; if you cannot lose your temper; if you can take the Secretary to your bosom when he is thoughtlessly.... standing heavily, on your corns; if you can spend precious hours in drafting documents and then see your work wasted, and spoiled without turning a hair; if you can use your wits to prevent the idle people from squabbling and then let all the bad blood pass off as 'your' fault; if all this makes your eyes glisten and your mouth water, then come on by all means to the meeting and I will be your warmest supporter.

From the 'ifs', hard as rocks, it looks that Sisyphus was vastly more fortunate than Shaw, the Committee-man!

Such were the varied, rich and inimitable ways and methods which the world learnt to bow to and accept as Shavianism. We are reminded of Shakespeare's immortal utterance: "Age cannot wither.... nor custom stale her (his) infinite variety."



A BURNING QUESTION

BY SAILESH BHAR



HE house looked gloomy. When Samiran came home from office he stopped short before the staircase. All around him was dreadful loneliness. He thought it was not his own home, but by mistake, he had come to an unknown and uninviting place.

Under an arch over the door nested a couple of pigeons. Samiran often met them as he went up or down the stairs. They were not there and the clock in the hall had stopped after striking two.

In the afternoon, Sadhana usually tuned the radio and listened as she did the hair; but the set was mute. The dog could not be found in his "kennel" under the stairs. The whole place was lonesome and Samiran was very nervous.

Then, something struck him and he shivered as he thought of it. He felt uneasy and his eyes became dim. What if his fear came true! He hurried up, almost making three steps at a time; he was really frightened.

Samiran's room was just across the stairs. He stumbled as he came in front of the door which was locked. Fortunately, the key was left behind and Samiran entered the room. The first thing he did was to examine the beams and the rafters. No, there was no one hanging and no one was in the bed which was nice and clean and well made.

Good, he said to himself, she had not committed suicide. There was a sigh of relief and he thought of God in silent prayer. Now he might be sure she was alive and he could relax for a while in the bed.

He thought Sadhana had left in a hug and must have gone to her father's place. He could easily fetch her. Nobody knew more than herself that he could not live without her.

They were married two years ago and love was fresh. It could not be otherwise. When one happened to have fits of temper the other used to hold up a mirror and say: "See, how nice you look when angry". The cloud used to lift amidst laughter and relations would soon become normal.

But something happened to Samiran in the morning and he created a very nasty scene which

he could never have dreamt. He shuddered as he thought of it and resolved that anything like it would not happen again.

Now, he had nothing else to do but to have a wash and go out. As he took his pen from his pocket to lay it on the table, he was seized with horror. There he found a letter for him written by Sadhana. He took it up with some hesitation and opened it. Sadhana wrote, "I well knew, I was nobody to you but I cannot make you see how dear you are to me. I do feel, I am a nuisance or why could I not be happy with a husband like yourself. There is nothing for me except doing away with myself. Don't try to seek me. I shall take refuge in the river as an unworthy wife. My last prayer to you is that you marry someone you like and be happy. Think of me as an evil influence and forgive me, if you can."

Samiran writhed in pain and flopped down on a chair before the table and then cried like a child. He would not see her again! Why should a fellow be born at all in this strange place called the world?

Whoever had come in touch with Sadhana felt that there was not another woman like her. She was not a beauty in the strict sense of the term but she was handsome and charming. She was always cheerful but never proud. She often wore a fascinating smile in her very pretty face. And women in the locality agreed that she was a rare humorist. She and Samiran hit it off very well with each other. When Samiran went to office she would do some household work, but the family was small and there was very little work to do. When she was at a loose end she played with the dog or sang away or read some current novels or went round the neighbourhood. And in the afternoon, she waited for Samiran. And when she heard the familiar footsteps of her husband in the stairs she was overjoyed.

Samiran would come up to her and she got busy. She would rummage his pocket, tousle his hair and toy with his tie. And Samiran was equally 'naughty'. He would undo her carefully made knob of hair or tickle her nose with a feather and before she sneezed out he would disappear.

With the passing of years they became more and more attached. They were a very happy couple. Everybody in the locality knew it well.

What happened this morning was, doubtless, unpleasant but not dangerous. While smoking the day before, Samiran accidentally burnt his shirt but he was not aware of it until Sadhana pointed out the hole.

Samiran was sorry and expressed regret for what had happened.

'You should be punished for this' Sadhana tried to be serious.

'Well', Samiran agreed 'What the punishment would be like?'

'You must not smoke for three days' was the answer.

'As you please, madam.'

After dinner, Sadhana had to finish some odd jobs and was a little late in coming up. She found Samiran resting in a chair with his legs across the table and smoking away a cigarette with great relish.

'What is this?' Sadhana was disagreeably surprised and rebuked him 'What on earth are you doing?'

'Why? Whatever is the matter?' said Samiran as he rose from his chair in some hurry.

Sadhan pointed at his cigarette and said in a rough voice 'What is all this?'

'Oh, ho,' cried Samiran and then he cast away the cigarette end and said 'I really forgot all about it.'

'It must not happen again' she remarked.

'I think you should keep the tin with you', said Samiran.

'Very well' Sadhana agreed and she locked it up in her cabinet.

The following morning Samiran again forgot all about the accident and searched for the tin before leaving for office but could not find it and then he remembered his penalty.

But unless one had a smoke to top off a decent meal he thought life was not worthwhile. How could Sadhana know the pleasure of smoking? She should not be that meddlesome.

Now Samiran was in a fix. He could not buy cigarettes on his way as Sadhana gave him just the money he needed for a transport to and from office.

'But unless I have a smoke now I shall be terribly sleepy' thought Samiran.

'Please give me the key of the cabinet' said Samiran and tried to be nice.

Sadhan bridled up as she said 'Why? What do you want it for?'

'I do require it' said Samiran with a smile.

'No' was the definite answer.

'No?' Samiran flared up. 'What do you mean by no?'

'No has no other meaning', was the clear and distinct answer.

'I am not going to hear all that stuff', Samiran spoke loudly. He was rather angry. 'Do give me what I want.'

'I will do nothing of the kind'.

'Won't you?' muttered Samiran.

'No, no, no', flamed out Sadhana.

Later, Samiran could not remember all he said or did but he felt he was very offensive. He told her that he did not wish to see her face and that she must leave before he returned from office. The wife, who wanted to rule over her husband, was a despicable creature and so on and so forth.

Alas! That Sadhana was now beyond all reproof.

Samiran heaved a sigh. He felt like slapping his cheeks. He was, doubtless, a fool, otherwise how could he behave like that. He was in mental torture.

How could he show his face in a society. People would say: 'A fellow who can not make his wife happy, should not have married'. 'And what kind of man he is who cannot forgive'? After all how could he do a thing like that?

He could not figure out what was to be done now.

He stretched himself in bed and wept as he put his face against the pillow.

Just at that moment he felt a tickle about his leg. He stopped crying and was stiff as a log. Again there was a tickle about his neck. Now, Samiran knew the story and there was no mistake. Instead of sitting up with joy, he was feverish for a hectic moment.

"Tit for tat" a very familiar voice was heard from under the bed.



Swarnakamal Bhattacharyya meets



HE lion looked furious. He was named Satan. He really had the looked of Satan. I cannot say how Satan looked, but from the lion's look I could guess how Satan looked, at least approximately. His roarings were very deep. But he rarely roared. He preferred lying mostly in the corner of his artificial den to walking about and showing himself to the visitors in the zoo. Even the sight of the lovely boys and girls with soft flesh could not entice him. Perhaps he would be enticed and liked very much to eat up these soft and beautiful creatures all in one bite. Perhaps his inability to break open this iron cage only discouraged him. It was really very ignoble for a king of beasts to be caged to be controlled, to be locked by very fragile beings like men. Perhaps he felt this irony of fate very much. Perhaps it had constantly been cutting him to the quick. This was probably why he preferred to live in a corner of his den without caring for what these insignificant men, women and children said and did about him. He had been practising this abstract disinterestedness since he had come to this zoo. He has already passed fine gloomy years in this zoo. There was no doubt that he did not like the zoo at all.

During this short spell Satan has committed three murders. The victims were his own men—those service men who came to feed him meat, who cleaned his den and gave him medicine along with his food when he appeared ill. In each case the victims were trapped by his seeming disinterestedness. Each time he pretended being asleep and jumped upon these poor creatures while they came to serve him carelessly. He was real Satan. In all of these cases he had slapped his victims and left them fatally wounded and watched their pathetic death. He did not eat their flesh nor sucked their blood. He possibly had imbibed this habit from the human beings who roam about him, for they too love to show off their prowess in killing men, but they never eat the flesh of those men killed by them, because their civilization so de-

mands. The lion had probably learnt this much of civilization from human beings, fragile beings by whom he has been caged.

Satan was falls leo i.e. West African lion. He was 580 lbs. in weight. His eyes were amber coloured and reflected light in the night. The eyes were fierce—all the ferocities of the African jungle lay stored in his eyes. The lioness lived with him in the same cage. But he never appeared to be interested in her. At the time of heat he no doubt responded. But he appeared fierce in the act also. He climbed the lioness fiercely, bit the skin on her neck like leather and finished his job in the twinkling of an eye and then went back to the dark corner of his den. The lioness would roll herself on the sandy floor in an ecstasy not known to the lion. He used to watch her in her physical ecstasies, her rapture, her thrill.

The lion had almost all the traits of a strict organisation man or Administrator—quick and fierce in his action and then watchful of the results of his action in a mood of perfect disinterestedness.

The lion was the most unpopular animal in the zoo. The children did not like him. They could seldom see him as he always lay in the dark corner of his den. Only one man, I noticed, was attracted to this animal. He was the Ex-Maharaja of a liquidated state. He resided near the zoo in his son's bungalow. His son was an Administrator General. This Ex-Maharaja had nothing in common with the lion except his eyes and the lips. The lion had a monstrous body, while the Maharaja was merely a skeleton. His pant and coat hung on his body as if on a piece of moving bamboo. But his eyes? They resembled perfectly those of the lion. There was another thing common between the two, I noticed. It was their mood.

Once I noticed him sitting on a bench fixed near the lion's cage. The lion was ill. No visitor was allowed to see him. This old man only was not barred. He was on the bench resting. His eyes were half-open but they appeared to see nothing. I was sweeping the street near him.

Suddenly I heard him calling me—"Hai".

'Yes, Sir,' I answered, as I came forward and saluted him.

'Do you know, who I am ? I am the father of the Administrator General. I was a king. I draw Rs. 1000/- pension every month. I spend it on this lion. Even more, do you know, this lion belongs to me ? Do you know I purchased him from West Africa and kept him here? Do you know all this ?'

'No Sir !' I said, filled with wonder.

'How much do you get here?' he asked me again in the same authoritative voice.

'One hundred and ten rupees, sir,' I answered very meekly.

'How old are you?'

'Fifty five, Sir.' I said.

'Then at most you may work upto sixty.'

'You will earn at most Rs. 6,600/- during these years. If you die earlier, you will earn even less. If you live long, you will suffer long. Nobody will take care of you. Old age is unbearable and very cold. Your aching bones will not carry the burden of your body. You will be a loathsome burden. But you can avoid it and at the same time earn a lot if you like.'

'How, Sir?' I enquired very innocently.

'There is a way. Will you do what I say?' he asked me very gravely.

'Sure, I will,' I said, anxious to know the way.

'You, sell yourself. I will purchase you. I will pay you Rs. 14,000/-, double of what you will earn. Ready?

'A good price, sir.'

'Yes, but do you know what I shall do with you after I purchase you ? I will ask you to enter the lion's cage and pull out the worms and insects that are sucking my lion's blood.'

'The lion will kill me'. I cried, horrified as I was and my broom fell from my trembling hands.

'This is why I wanted to purchase you. The lion killed only three men. Now he lies morosely in his den. He does not even come out of the dark corner to eat meat. I spent a thousand rupees for him every month, and still he suffers. You see the



.... There was a faint smile in them.

doctors can't cure him. They only annoy him. This is why he killed the medical boy. He has to kill some more men to regain his health and good mood. Do you know, how many men I killed? I pronounced capital punishment in 30 cases when I was a Maharaja and sat on my judgment throne. Out of them in 10 cases the Queen over-ruled my orders. Of the 20 cases where the criminals were hanged I witnessed the execution in ten cases".

The old man stopped and looked at me. His lips wore a different look now. There was a faint smile on them—the kind of smile I noticed on the lips of the lion when he watched the three victims he had killed or when he witnessed his lioness in her raptures, her thrills.

He stopped suddenly. Then his lips also wore a different look a pale bitter look the lion had these days. I noticed how this Ex-Maharaja was tuned to the lion as he swept away speedily with trembling limbs. I had so many streets and lanes of the zoo to sweep still. I went on sweeping but could not keep my mind away from the lion or the old man. Sometimes I was seized with fear, the fear of the lion falling on me and the old man watching his lion killing the man he had purchased.

For a few days, I did not see the ominous old man. One night I heard his whispering voice when I was chatting with Sabu in his small quarter after dinner. He always whispered and could not tolerate loud noises or even a sharp voice. The other day he ordered his grandson to kill the birds that chirp in the gardens of his son's bungalow. The young man killed 500 birds to please his grandfather. But this old man had gone out in his car when the shooting continued to avoid the sound of the gun. He liked his lion all the more because he rarely roared.

Sabu came out of his hut and saluted him.

"What are you doing, men?" asked the old man in a low voice.

'Nothing, sir'.

'Then come on and open the cage of my lion. I have brought a prey for him.'

Often he brought live animals, live goats, calves



I will pay you money handsomely

and young asses and asked Sabu to open the cage. I used to assist Sabu. We both got bakshis for our untimely help. So Sabu called me gladly. We both came out and found a trembling man standing by the old man. I know what this man was for. Sabu was amazed not to find any prey.

'Where is the prey?' he asked.

The old man pointed his finger to that trembling man.

"What! A human being? An *insan* to throw another *insan* into a lion's mouth! impossible!"

'I will pay you money, handsomely.'

'Impossible' Sabu cried again.

'I will pay you ten thousand rupees.'

'Impossible'

He looked at me, and said 'twenty thousand'.

'No' I said.

'Forty thousand, fifty thousand,' he said in an excited but whispering voice.

Sabu was shocked and fell unconscious. I carried him into his quarters on my shoulders. He came to his senses after a little nursing and muttered. "Fifty thousand rupees—*insan* to throw on *insan* into the lion's mouth," as he opened his eyes.

I went out to see what the old man did then. From the gate of Sabu's quarters the cage of the lion could be seen. I saw that the old man had somehow managed to open the cage and were trying to throw the human prey into the cage. I knew this human prey had sold himself to this Ex-Maharaja but now he was resisting with all his might. At last he succumbed and was thrown into the cage. The lion jumped on him, broke his neck, sucked his blood and roared at the old man because he was greedily watching his prey. The lion ordi-

narily roars to challenge his rival. Perhaps this lion thought the Ex-Maharaja to be his rival, and roared terribly. I saw the old man put the cage under lock after the first roar. He went a few steps back after the second roar and fell on the ground on the third.

I ran to my small hut at the end of the zoo and went to bed. I could not sleep. So I took a ball of opium and fell asleep.

Next morning I was very late in waking. I was awakened by the hoarse rebukes of the Zamadar.

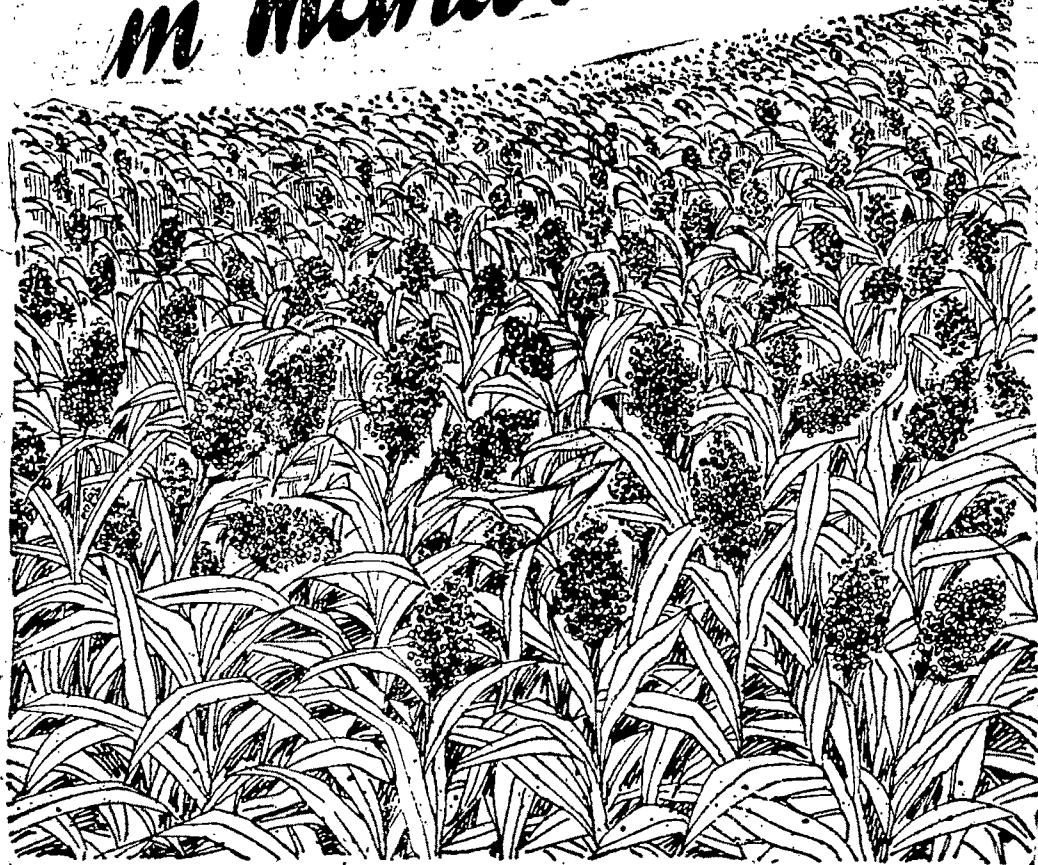
"What are you doing, Kalua, only sleeping day and night. Come up and see what happened last night."

"What?" I enquired as I rubbed both my eyes.

He dragged me towards the bamboo bushes near the pond. There were seen many men, sahebs and police crowding around something. I stood behind the Zamadar and peeped. There lay in the centre of the crowd the old Ex-Maharaja.....half eaten by some animals. Then I went to the lion's cage. I could find no trace of the man, the Ex-Maharaja had thrown into the cage. The lion must have devoured him up completely. On other occasions he would not eat his victim. This time he probably feared his rival, the Ex-Maharaja. By his instinct he knew the old man was his real rival. Had he intelligence he would have realized how fragile this old man was; also that he could not stand and survive even three of his roars. Further that jackals that even did not dare come in his sight ate him up. But the instinct of the lion was correct in understanding the Ex-Maharaja's mind. It was as brutal as his own.



*Green
Revolution
set apace
in Maharashtra*



DIRECTORATE OF PUBLICITY, GOVT. OF MAHARASHTRA, BOMBAY.



What Uncle Bequeaths

CARLYLE G. BERKELEY



T was one of Madhab's most trying mornings, with everything in the small hall in riotous disorder and with his young mind in no less confusion.

He stood atop the ladder, joining the ends of multi-coloured streamers to the taut twine for his birthday celebra-

tion tomorrow. Down below, amid the litter, was the object of his troubled mind — Uncle Raj. Of course, it was all over Sujata, with Tipu adding to it all by running away to play with the neighbours.

Seeing that Uncle Raj dozed in the wheel chair, Madhab furtively raised his tall, wiry figure to the air ventilator and peered through the grillwork — one half of his mind longing to see Sujata come jaunting along the gravel driveway with her long auburn hair fluttering about in the warm Calcutta breeze, and the other half wishing that she wouldn't.

"Patience, my boy, patience," Uncle Raj's feeble voice broke the stillness. "There's plenty of time; she'll show up."

Madhab started, then glowered down at the wizened old man bent up with age in the wheel chair, his silvery, scanty hair tousled and scattered about his crinkled but handsome face. "Why do you insist she'll drop in?" Madhab bristled. "I've told you she won't."

Raj beamed. "Because you're still too young to understand the mind of lovers. Because you don't have half the experience I have of life, especially human beings. That's why, my boy."

"Rot!" his nephew snorted, and growing annoyance began to etch itself in hard lines on his long, pleasant countenance. "A person doesn't have to be seventy to understand humans and love. I can do that at twenty-five."

"Quite! And yet you're sure she'll not look in? "Absolutely!"

"Then you don't know Sujata....." Madhab chortled with amusement. "Don't I? I'm the one who's in love with her. I'm the one who's been with her for the past five years. I've

been more in her company than you have. And yet you make the sweeping statement that I don't know her? You can take it from me she won't pay us a visit today."

"Humph! You can say what you want, but I know she will—and today."

"And when she doesn't you're going to look very sick indeed, Uncle."

Raj laughed good-humouredly. "That'll be the day, my boy!"

Scowling, Madhab returned to his chore of decorating the room. And once more he wondered why the old man never could agree with him. Uncle and he had always been at loggerheads arguing and quarrelling endlessly, disagreeing with any and everything that was said or done. Uncle would never cease to call him contentious, and, for want of the right word, Madhab would think of Uncle as Mr. Know All, a term which he had borrowed from a Maugham story of that title.

But what had exasperated him more than anything was the fact that his mother's elder brother was invariably right; never once had his predictions gone awry. As such Uncle Raj had gained the respect and admiration of everyone, even to the extent of being deified, with the sole exception of Madhab. And somehow this once Madhab strongly felt that his uncle would be wrong.

He knew Sujata better: She was too proud and stubborn to make the first move towards a reconciliation. Besides, human beings were such that as wooer, the man would inevitably take the first step to make up. Of course he was aware of exceptions to this rule, but he could not imagine Sujata as one. And the very fact that she hadn't yet materialized, nor sent for the new shawl she had bought and left behind a week ago, when she walked out on him after the quarrel proved that she would not call on him. It made it abundantly clear, in fact, that it would have to be him, if he so much as cared, to settle the differences, which of course he had sworn not to do this time. He had set his heart

on marrying her and giving in to her now would make life infinitely worse later on.

With most of this knowledge at his command, how could Uncle Raj keep insisting that Sujata would present herself today? Was he being over-confident? Or was he growing too old still to foretell events accurately? Madhab's mind reeled from the effort to get at the problem.

"What are you prepared to lose if I'm right?" Uncle Raj asked after a while.

Madhab turned and looked down, visibly surprised at the unexpected turn of his elder's mind. "I'm not in the habit of gambling, but since you want to bet, I'll forfeit my Puja holidays."

Raj simpered mischievously. "Reconsider, my boy, reconsider. Every Puja you go to some health resort or the other with Sujata, or whomever you are friendly with at the time. Would you readily make such a sacrifice?"

"There's really no need to. I'm one hundred per cent sure she wouldn't show herself this day".

"Not even to prepare the ground for coming to the birthday party tomorrow with your present?"

"Not even then, that much I know her." Madhab could still recall the way she had treated her previous boyfriend, not going over to his place to wish him a happy birthday just because they had quarrelled.

At that moment Madhab's mother entered the room.

"Are you two still bickering?" Nalini asked, standing akimbo. She was short, well built; her white sari bore the hall marks of the kitchen, and she removed the long strands of her dark hair from her angular visage.

"Uncle insists that Sujata will return today...."

"....and, you obviously disagree?"

"I know she wouldn't, Mum"

Nalini made a face. "I'm just looking at the mess you have made. While you two bicker all the decorations are still lying about and tomorrow's your birthday party, Madhab."

"It'll be complete, my girl," Uncle Raj assured her. "Only a few hours' work."

"But I have to send Madhab out. The tailor hasn't turned up with Tipu's new outfit.... Madhab, take the car and see what's the matter with him."

"Ah, he'd love to do that—wouldn't you, my boy?" Uncle Raj smirked significantly, looking up at Madhab.

"What do you mean?" Madhab raised his voice irritably.

"You'd love to pass Sujata's place, wouldn't you?"

"I'm not going" Madhab said indignantly, stamping dangerously on the ladder.

"He's only teasing you, son. Now run along...."

"The joke's on Madhab, Nalini," Raj chortled. "He has his Puja holidays to lose...."

"Oh, stop vexing him, Raj: There's so much to be done without you increasing our troubles. Get going, Madhab, before it gets too late."

"Since you're ordering Madhab away do please send Tipu in to keep me company, Nalini...."

Madhab drove the car out of the driveway, wondering how Uncle Raj had read his mind. When his mother had asked him to see the tailor, he had instantly thought of driving via Sujata's house, if not with the intention to make it up with her, then surely to ask her not to put in an appearance today, just to prove Uncle wrong for once.

He looked back. No one was watching, so he swerved the car left, knowing that he would have to make a detour to reach Sujata's house, and must not be too long lest Uncle's suspicions grew.

His heart began to pound faster, though, as he approached her house. He felt he shouldn't be doing this. If she wished to stay away, to forget him, he ought to stay away, too, and not try to meet her on any pretext.

He stopped at the curb a short distance away from her place, his heart beats keeping time with the throbbing machine. He looked at the sprawling house surrounded by trees and a front garden, and felt the atmosphere of peace and serenity reigning all around: And then he realised how much he had missed her, how much he still longed to see her. He wanted to step out, rush into the house, say that he was sorry, sweep her into his arms, and ask her to come to his birthday party tomorrow....

Curiously he gunned the motor into life and shot off with a burst of speed. With compressed lips he glanced at her place as he drove past. And then he looked a second time, for he was sure he has seen someone framed in the window. But there was no one there now. Imagination! That's what it must be, he told himself, and steered the wheel vigorously barely escaping a head-on collision with a truck.

* * * * *

"What did the tailor say, son?" Nalini asked Madhab, giving Uncle's leg a last press.

"He'll be here in an hour or so.

"He was there then," Raj asked skeptically.

"Yes.... Why?"

"Did you see her?" Uncle Raj bantered.

Madhab frowned. "Who?"

"Sujata, and who?"

Madhab coloured deeply. "Mummy, look at Uncle!"

"He's only joking, son." Nalini grimaced.

"Oh, no, I'm not", Raj was quick to correct. "Ask him to swear he didn't go past her place."

"I didn't!" Madhab almost screamed, red in the face.

"Oh, yes, you did. You stopped a short distance away, didn't you? You almost collided with a truck, didn't you? You hoped to meet her. Say No!"

Momentarily Madhab's brow puckered, as he tried to fathom how Uncle Raj had come by such correct information. Then, all of a sudden, he got it. "Where's Tipu, Mother?" he asked, grinding his teeth.

"I don't know; perhaps with the neighbours."

"Neighbours my foot! He must have been in the back seat of the car. Wait till I get my hands on him, that—"

Just then there was a knock on the front door.

"That must be her," Uncle Raj whooped.

Madhab swung round and glared at him. "It isn't! I've told you she would not come."

"You two are impossible," Nalini grumbled, rising from the floor and marching off to see who it was.

Madhab's heart began to thump wildly. Was Uncle right after all? Was it Sujata at the door? If it was she, he would surely lose his bet—and gone was his lovely holiday! No doubt he and Sujata would be one again, but what would he tell her when the Puja approached? He couldn't possibly demean himself by telling her that he had lost a bet with Uncle all over her. Why! That might spark off another quarrel.

"No, no, not here.... Please try next door," Nalini said, closed the door, then walked back saying: "A salesman."

Madhab turned to Uncle and tittered with an air of triumph. But Uncle seemed to be unaffected as he met the young man's smile with an even more brighter one.

"So you were wrong," Madhab said, and before the other had time to answer the knock was heard again.

"This time it must be her," Uncle Raj declared happily.

Again Nalini strode to the door while Madhab stood in suspense, expecting that it was the salesman again, that it was the tailor, or, for that matter, anyone else but Sujata. He stood wringing his hands, his face contorted with anxiety.

"Oh, my, what a pleasant surprise!" Madhab heard her say. "Come in, come in, my girl! We've been expecting you."

Madhab braced himself for the shock as the door was opened to full view, his heart racing faster than ever.

And then, like a beauty queen emerging before the audience, Sujata breezed in. She was tall, lean and as pretty as on the day she had stomped out. Her black sari, with sequins at the borders, threw into sharp relief her shapely figure. Her new hair-do had completely altered her appearance for the better.

Sujata folded her hands in greeting to Nalini and Uncle; deliberately ignoring Madhab. Injured, Madhab turned away only to confront his uncle's beaming countenance. Hot blood surged to his face and he clenched his fists tightly, angry that Sujata had come.

"I'm afraid I won't be able to stay long," Sujata said. "Mother's not well and I must hurry back."

Madhab frowned. Hurry back? But why the haste? Had she not come to patch up things?

"Oh, dear!" Nalini exclaimed. "I'm really sorry to hear of your mother's illness. . . ."

"May I have the shawl, Ma."

Madhab looked crestfallen. So it wasn't him that she had come to see! And all along he had foolishly imagined that she couldn't do without him, that she had come to see and make it up with him. Oh, what a moron he had been!

But, on the other hand, it was well that she hadn't come to see him. He felt somewhat happy that at long last Uncle was unmistakably proved wrong. This would certainly teach Uncle a good lesson and bring him down a peg or two from the exalted position he occupied.

"Won't you stay for a cup of tea?"

"Thank you, but I must get back quickly."

"What a shame! . . . Uncle Raj has kept your shawl, dear. He wouldn't let anyone handle it, not even Madhab."

Madhab swore under his breath, the muscles of his face working vigorously. There was really no need to have brought his name into it at all. Why couldn't people mind their own business?

"It's a beautiful piece of embroidery, Sujata," Uncle said brightly. "That's why I kept it. Come along and I'll show you where it is." He wheeled his chair round and headed straight for his room with Sujata following him closely.

Madhab glanced at Raj curiously, and frowned at Uncle smiling. Uncle Raj was wrong after all. No doubt Sujata had come—but not to make it up with him. And yet Uncle Raj did not seem to be one whit worried. Did he have something up his sleeves?

It was not a wholesome thought, but what was he to suppose when Uncle could have stooped to such a scurvy trick as getting Tipu to spy on him. And he wasn't going to give the old man another chance, this time to set Sujata up to shake hands with him.

Madhab quickly strode into the room. Raj turned round and grinned. "Oh, it's you spying on us. No, I amn't up to any tricks. I assure you. . . . The shawl is on top of the cupboard. Would you mind getting it down, since Sujata cannot reach it?"

Madhab raised himself on his toes, got the packet down, ignored Sujata's outstretched hand and gave it to Uncle.

"Here you are, my girl," Uncle said, giving the bundle to her. Then he began to wheel himself out.

Madhab turned to follow Uncle out when Sujata said softly, "Madhab, may I have a few words with you?"

Uncle Raj stopped and wheeled round. He was beaming. "In case I croak it before the holidays arrive, Madhab, I bequeath to you the Puja holidays. Have a good time." Then he winked and wheeled himself out as Sujata took Madhab's hand in hers.



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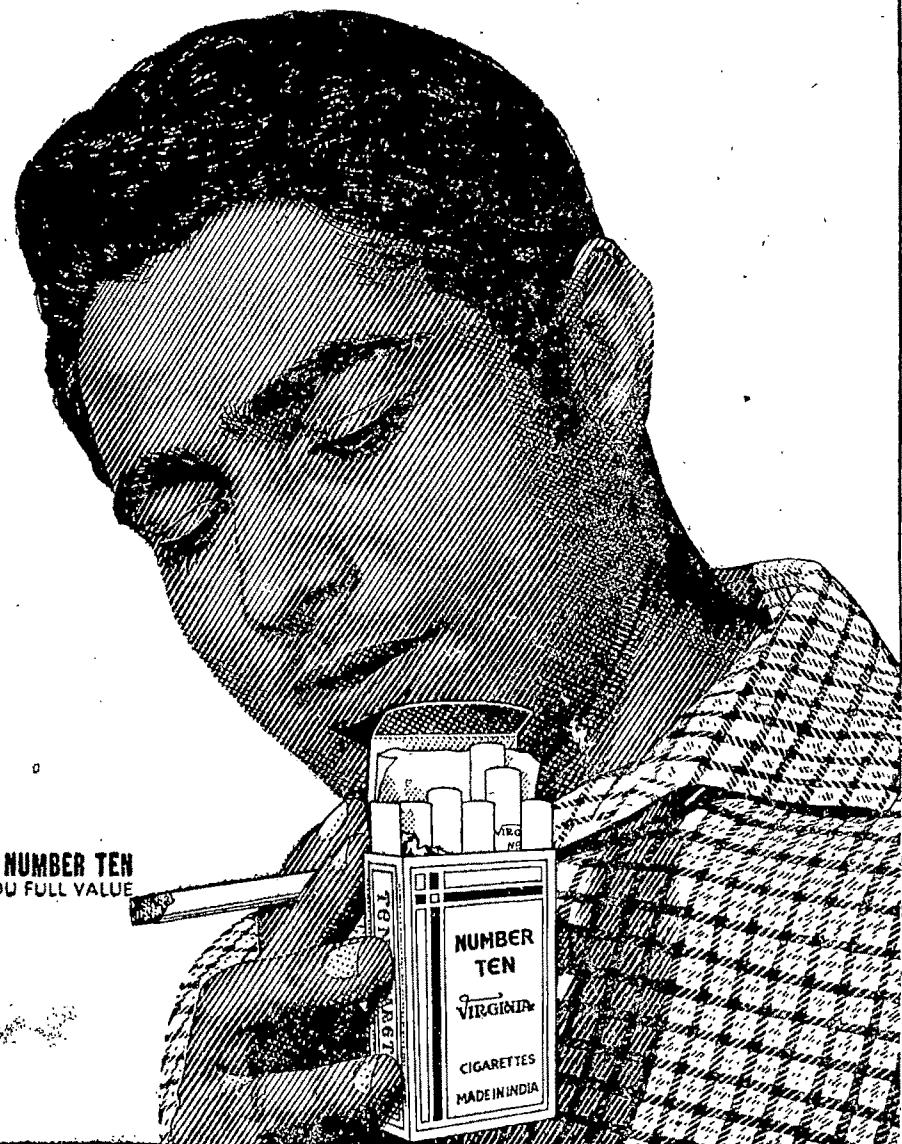
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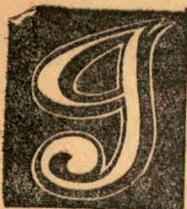


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CASTEISM in LAW

by HARATOSH CHAKRABARTI



In the present caste-ridden society of ours, it may come as a surprise to many that in the old, old days when the early part of the Rigveda was being composed, division of men into water-tight compartments according to their vocations, was unknown. Thus, in the ninth

Mandala of the Rigveda a 'Rishi' says that his father was a physician, while his mother was a grinder of corn. The urge of philosophic queries, opening up glorious vistas of thought and leading to the marvellous divination of the One in all, absorbed all the energy and activities of a certain class of people. There was also the growing religious need of the people at large to reckon with. And the two combined together to give rise to the priestly or Brahmin class. The military need of those turbulent days on the other hand, when a sufficient number of people had to be ever on the alert to defend the newly-acquired territory and to pounce upon the enemy at the weakest moment for more, led to the rise of a class of militant people, known as Kshatriyas. The rest or the Vis did all the other functions of the nascent society and of them, the Sudras, who descended from the aborigines, got themselves easily singled out because of their dark colour or "Krishna Twak". The division of people into four classes was thus complete and the Hindu tendency of carrying an idea to its ultimate logical end, converted class into caste. With the passage of time, the inter-mixture of blood with the aborigines increased. This made them anxious to preserve the purity of the race and the divisions became tighter and tighter. The result was disastrous.

The lot of the Sudras was particularly miserable as the colour bar accompanied the inevitable cruelty and neglect of the conqueror to the conquered. Manu would even compel a Sudra to perform his job and the Gautama Dharmasutras laid down that a Sudra is to maintain himself by the

remnants of the food of the men of higher caste and to cover his body with their cast-off garments. He may raise a family but is denied all intellectual or spiritual pursuits. Special and stringent penal provisions were made for violation of any code of conduct. Thus, the Gautama Dharmasutras record that if a Sudra presumes to listen to the recitation of the Vedas, his ears shall be filled with molten tin or lac and if he dares to recite a Vedic text, his tongue shall be cut off. If he remembers any Vedic text or hymn, his body shall be cleft in twain. And he will have to suffer corporal punishment if he is arrogant enough to claim or make a show of equality with a twice-born in sitting, lying down or conversation in the road. The sanctions against spiritual pursuits continued with full rigour, with presumable relaxation of course in the period of Buddhist influence, right up to the Muslim invasion of India as is quite evident from Kautilya's Arthashastra and the observations of Alberuni. Thus, Kautilya would have a Sudra blinded by poisonous ointments for pretending to be a Brahmin. And Alberuni says that if a Vaisya or a Sudra heard or pronounced Vedic texts, he was hauled up by the Brahmins before Magistrates who ordered his tongue to be cut off.

INVIDIOUS PART

The most invidious part of the matter is that the distinction invaded the domain of general law as well. The Gautama Dharmasutras would make the Brahmins immune from all corporal punishment, imprisonment, fine and exile but would cut off the offending limb of a Sudra for mere use of abusive language or criminal force on a twice-born. The Baudhayana Dharmasutras tell us that one has to compensate the relatives of the deceased by delivering to them 1000 cows for the killing of a Kshatriya but only 10 cows for the killing of a Sudra. We are further given to understand that one has to pay the same amount of fine for killing a peacock, a crow, an owl or a dog as he would have to pay for the killing of a Sudra. The supreme

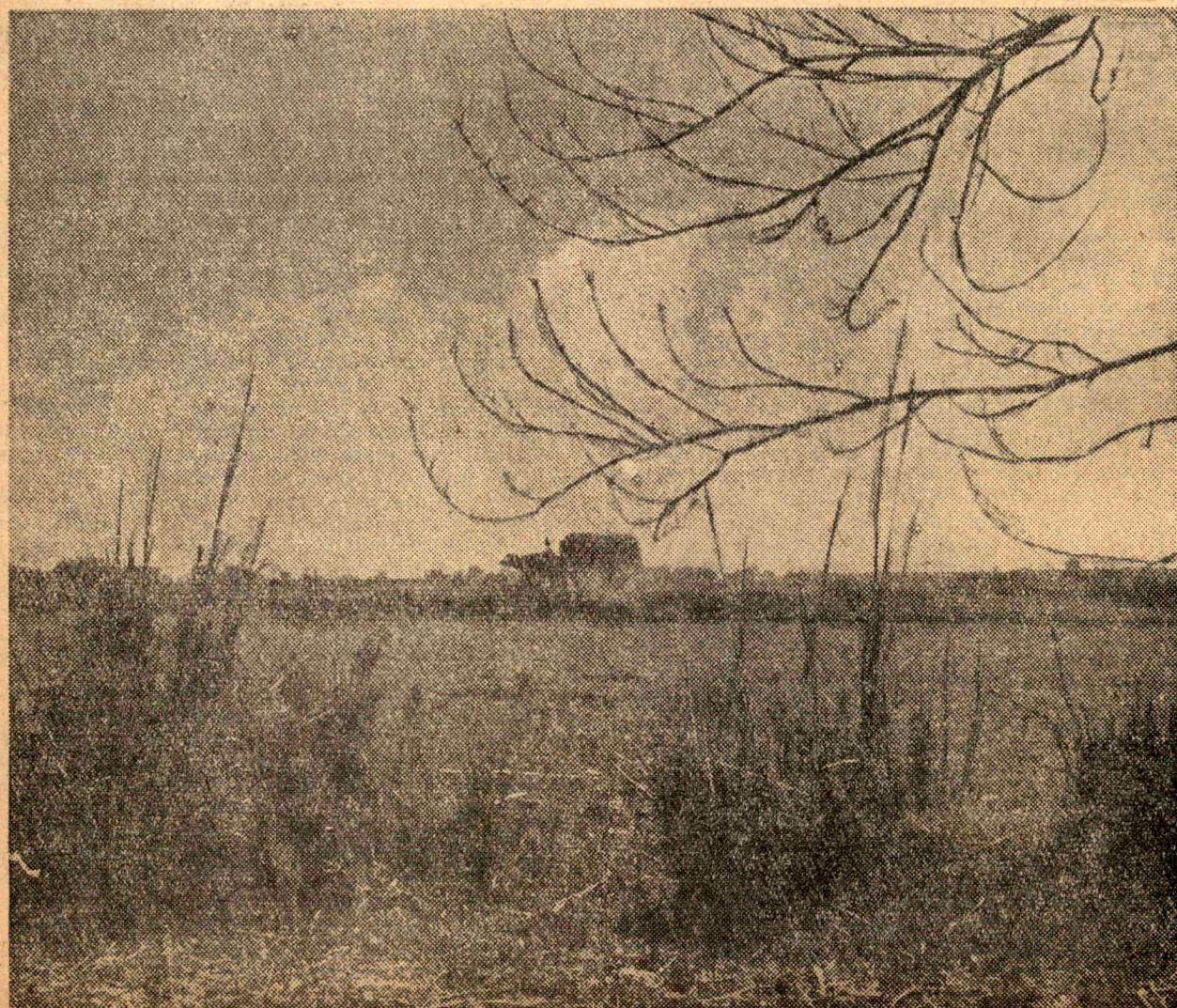
contempt characterising such equation of human life with the life of an animal or a bird can better be imagined than said. Vasistha would have a Sudra capitally punished after confiscation of properties for killing or theft. For the same offence, however, a Brahmin would only be blinded. Kautilya on the other hand would exempt the Brahmins altogether from capital punishment except, of course, in the case of treason and would consider it sufficient to brand them for murder, theft, adultery or drunkenness. Thus for theft, the figure of a dog would be branded on their forehead, for murder that of a human trunk, for adultery that of mens veneris and for drinking that of a winter's flag. It must be borne in mind that for others severe corporal punishment including dismemberment of the offending limb and even death followed such offences. Alberuni tells us that for murdering a man of another caste, a Brahmin had only to expiate by fasting, prayers and alms-giving whereas for the same offence a Vaisya or a Sudra would be put to death. As for theft Alberuni goes on, if the object stolen is of high value, a Brahmin would be blinded and deprived of his left hand and right foot or right hand and left foot, a Kshatriya would be simply mutilated without being blinded, while a Vaisya or a Sudra would forfeit his life.

Distinction of caste vitiated even the procedural law. Trial by ordeal was much in vogue in those days. And we have it from Brihaspati that if for a low-class man, a certain ordeal is found necessary

for the claim over a certain quantum of money or property, for a middle-class man, twice the amount would be necessary for the same ordeal while for a high-class man, four times the amount would justify such an ordeal. There is further definite admission that ordeals for Brahmins were lighter.

Indeed, the Brahmins were almost beyond the reach of law in many respects. Brihaddharma Upapurana would exempt a Brahmin not only from punishment but also from payment of interest on loans. The most glaring example of the special privilege claimed by the Brahmins is to be found in Vasistha's recommendation that the King should punish the entire village where a Brahmin has to beg for his maintenance.

However, it must be added that the law-makers of old were wise enough to make special provisions for only those Brahmins who pursued the vocation allotted to them by birth. Thus, we get from the Baudhayana Dharmasutras that the Brahmins who tended cattle, cultivated lands or worked as artisans, actors or servants were to be considered as Sudras and were not immune from capital punishment. Gautama went still further and prescribed that the punishment inflicted on a commoner for a certain offence should be much increased if the offender was found to be a learned man. The logic here, namely, that the moral responsibility of the elite to society is much higher than that of a plebian, certainly does the old thinker a lot of credit.



SUNIL KUMAR DUTT

Sadhan Kumar Ghosh

COMIC TRAGEDY



RISTOTLE was a very wise man but, as F. L. Lucas, points out, his greatness lies in having asked the right questions not in supplying the right answers. The twentieth century is restive about his insistence in the *Poetics* that tragedy and comedy belong to different worlds and must not be mixed up. Tragedy was the enactment of the death of the year-spirit: Comedy was the enactment of his marriage.

It has long been known that Shakespeare implicitly rejected Aristotle's direction about not mingling tragedy and comedy. And the Porter-scene in *Macbeth* and the grave-diggers' scene in *Hamlet* are intended to enhance the terror, not to supply 'Comic relief'. Shakespeare's ambivalence is, however, best seen in the problem plays—*Troilus and Cressida*, *Measure, for Measure* and *All's Well That Ends Well*. But the supreme discovery was made by Professor Wilson Knight who points out that even in *King Lear* what is sublime is also ridiculous. Tragedy and comedy are seen, not to be separated, but to be interlocked.

Modern drama since Ibsen has tended towards what has been called "Comic Tragedy". In the work of Pirandello, Anouilh, Brecht and Beckett, life is shown as a mingled yearn, where tears and laughter do not alternate but are inextricably mixed up.

Pirandello's essay, *L'Umorismo* offers a clue to the "Comic Tragedy" of our times. Pirandello asks us to imagine an elderly lady. We are immediately predisposed to be sympathetic. But she is over-dressed, her face pointed, her hair dye like a girl's; we find this comic and we are ready to laugh, yet perhaps she is aware of the ridicule she is inviting, and is behaving in this way in order to hold the affections of her husband. We are sobered. The old lady seems pathetic again (we recall Arnold Bennett's *Old Wive's Tale* and Somerset Maugham's *Three Fat Women of Antibes*) and the laugh is 'on us.' The comic may be pathetic—and at the same time.

Perhaps not Ibsen, but Chekov is the first of the dark comedians or experimenters in Comic

Tragedy. He is closer to John Osborne and Wesker than to Ibsen and Strindberg. Chekov reconciles all his contradictions but beneath lies a ferment as troubled as Osborne's. In both *The Seagull* and *The Cherry Orchard* we laugh at youth and age while we see ourselves as the young and the old. But our laughter is modified by pity. The orchard itself summarised the hopes and regrets the desires and ideals of a way of life under transition.

Sean O'Casey had an instinct for and proneness to mixing the comic and the tragic. He does this deftly in *Juno and Paycock* and *The Plough and the Stars*. But it is in *The Silver Tassie*—the play which Yeats rejected for the Abbey Theatre and which subsequently made literary history—that this method is most conspicuously employed. This is particularly evident in the battle-field scene of the Second Act where the introduction of raw force into a scene of desolation reminds us of the porter-scene in *Macbeth*. This is brought home again in the Victory Celebrations of the last act. Lost in this bright festivity is a blind Teddy Foran who cannot see its brightness and legless Harry who must watch his girl dancing with other men.

But, as F. L. Lucas noted, Pirandello is the classic example of ambivalence. He is obsessed with human suffering. He turns its tragic note of exultation from triumph to humility and from dignity to indignity. J. L. Styan says: "Pirandello's intention is to show man the contradictions within life and within himself but especially to transmit to the spectator his own obsessed interest in man's erratic and impermanent mind with its capricious motives and behaviour." In Pirandello's *Six Characters*, nobody leaves the play with peace or honour. We persistently get the impression that life is greater than the characters and life always reasserts itself. There is a sort of *peripeteia* but not as Aristotle conceived it. Our puny impotence is ludicrous—and to do anything but laugh at this "tragedy" is to court of humiliation.

We then come to Alienation drama and the theatre of the Absurd. Brecht is the centre-piece of Alienation drama; and Beckett of the Absurd drama. Brecht's "epic theatre" is ostensibly an attack on the Aristotelean theatre, the Cathartic theatre, the theatre of trance. In *Mother Courage*,

Courage's dumb daughter Kattrin secretly dresses herself in Yvette's gaudy clothes, thereby expressing a pathetic wish to live in greater luxury than her spare existence will ever allow, the Dutch Cook sings lustily 'A mighty fortrees is our God' and what starts as a joke gradually reinforces the pathos it begins by checking.

Brecht was anxious that the audience should not identify himself with a serious character because identification would prevent thinking. The suffering of the character was to move the spectator, but he was to remain free to laugh about those who weep on the stage and weep about those who laugh. Brecht tried to promote a cold and rational response while at the same time he presented an intensely human drama. The response was inevitably tragic-comic. The gods who praise Shen Te (in *The Good Woman of Setzuan*) desert her in her poverty and despair and comically take their leave for heaven. For the sake of an orphan child, the pathetic and selfless Grusha (in *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*) is comically wedded to a man she does not love. Martin Esslin says that Brecht tried to spread logical clarity, but produced poetic ambiguity. In this double vision, he is symbolic of our times and his strength lies in this counterpoint of thought and feeling. Even his Mother Courage is a split character, and an anti-heroine.

Finally, there are the Absurd Dramatists—Beckett, Ionesco, Adamov and Genet. It is sheer accident that they all work in the French language and present their plays in the *avant-garde* theatres of Paris. They do not collaborate or constitute a school. They just have a common starting-point. They agree about the human predicament and the general purposelessness of the world. They try to convey the general absurdity as well as the collective guilt of the contemporary world.

Friedrich Durrenmatt writes: "Tragedy presupposes guilt, despair, moderation, lucidity, vision, a sense of responsibility. In the Punch—and Judy show of our century, in this backsliding of the white race, there are no more guilty and also no responsible man. It is always, 'We couldn't help it' and 'we didn't really want that to happen'."

In Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, waiting is not only a part of the human condition, it is the terror. The tramps in *Godot* constantly fear separation, although when they are together they share a mutual

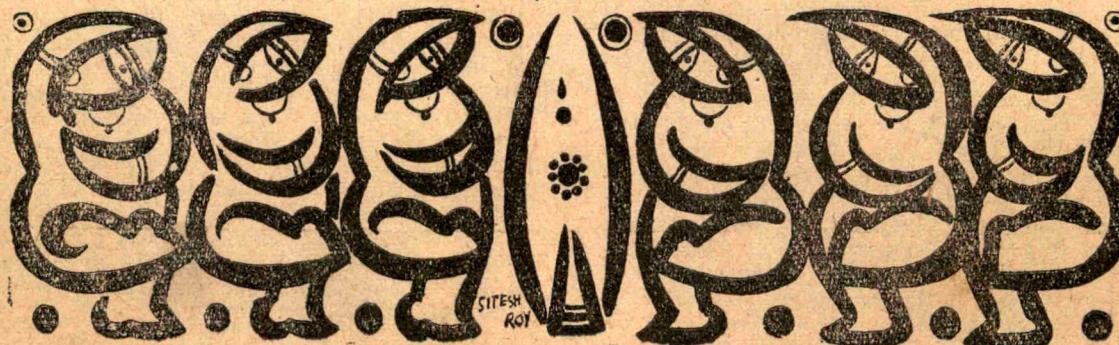
dislike, Ionesco's little Everyman appears in *Exit the King* to face death and dissolution. But no help can be expected from his court, his queen or his mistress who find his concern with death highly comic. The Absurd Dramatists, like Sartre, equate despair with solitude and silence. *Waiting for Godot* is the outstanding example of dramatic nightmare in the twentieth century. Yet there is a screen of laughter even if the laughter is that of hysteria.

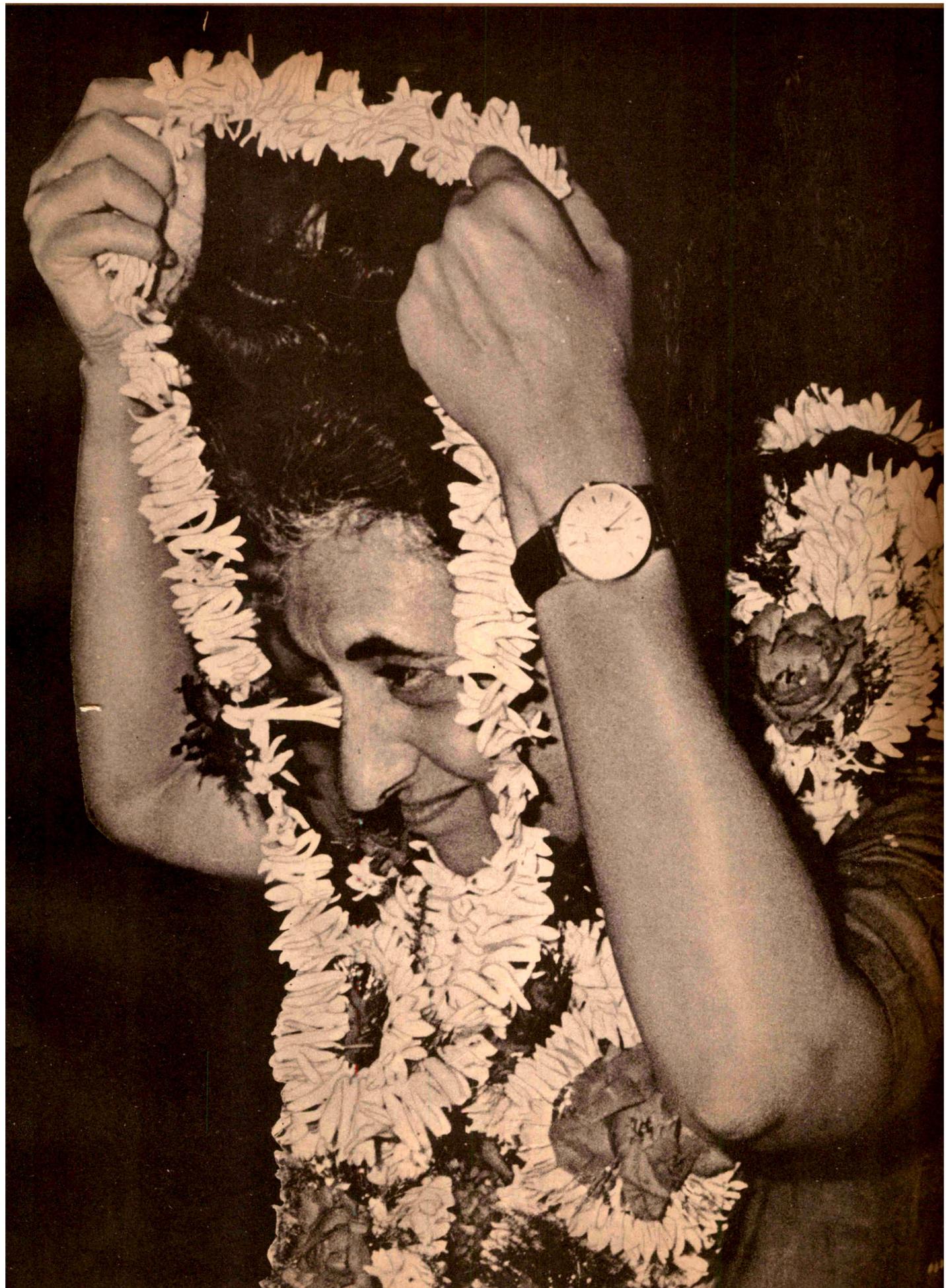
Ionesco in *The Chairs* expresses a theme that goes back to Matthew Arnold—the human longing for communication and the failure to achieve it. He underlines that in a crazy world, characters cannot be level-headed and rational. For Ionesco man in his mortal condition is a puppet, and life is a comfortless comedy.

Harold Pinter has been influenced by Ionesco and Genet. His first long play *The Birthday Party* is a comedy of menace. In a sleazy seaside boarding-house, a very proletarian Everyman named Stanly has buried himself from this world. But he is not spared and is exposed to terrifying persecution in his own birth-day party. The terror of the common, unassuming citizen in to-day's complicated world has never been more deftly communicated.

When Christopher Fry declared he must look for tragedy before he could find his comedy, he added: "In a century less flayed and quivering we might reach it more directly: but now unless every word we write is going to mock us." This has been the era of the anti-hero and the uncommitted theatre (Brecht notwithstanding). The modern play is a microcosm of natural life where laughter and tears are inextricably mixed up. Modern comic tragedy impels the spectator forward by stimulus to mind or heart and then distracts and muddles him. He experiences a tension. The tension is one of dramatic irony. As in Eliot's *The Waste Land*, comedy like the cricket brings no relief. Twentieth century drama is largely about Man—less about men. Hence this ambivalence which is a part of the human condition and which was foreseen by Shakespeare:

But, man, proud man
Dressed in a little brief authority
Most ignorant of what he's most assured
His glassy essence, like an angry ape
Plays such fantastic tricks before high
heaven
As make the angels weep.





WELCOME

SHYAMAL BOSE



THE BELOVED OF MANSINGH

by SHAMSUDDIN

M

AN SINGH TOMAR ruled in Gwalior; the 'Golden ruler of the Tomar dynasty', Sikandar Lodi, the ruler of Delhi, had his greedy eyes on Gwalior, the only strong Hindu fortress in the South of Delhi which defied him constantly.

Sultan Gayyasudin Khilji was enthroned in Mandu—the capital of Malwa—and Mahmood Baghra ruled Gujarat. The only other strong Hindu state was that of the Ranas of Udaipur, deep in Rajputana.

The sun was high in the sky. The village, with its hay-topped houses and muddy tracks, was passing through its afternoon siesta.

Ninni gathered up her heavy skirt in the front, and picked it up in the back, thus baring her long, shapely legs. She tied her big, coarse veil around her waist. Thus arrayed, she crouched, and, hardly breathing, advanced through the dense forest on the

other side of the river 'Sank' which flowed by the village. Lakhi—darker and shorter than Ninni, followed her.

Ninni sharply turned back and put her forefinger on her lips, a sign to be silent—as Lakhi stepped on to some dried leaves—making a crunching sound. They circled the small hillock but as Ninni reached the side of the hill, a rider on a fine Arab horse glided out from behind the hillock, facing her. He wore an iron mask, with two holes made for eyes and some sort of uniform.

"He is not from our Hindu Rajah's army. He is a Turk," Ninni thought.

She stood up straight; her heart lurched and her throat felt parched.

"Don't be scared", the rider said soothingly, "We won't hurt you".

Ninni looked up sharply at the 'we', and spotted another rider appearing from behind the hillock. Her heart started pounding—she could not cope with many of them.

"Who are you?" She asked.

Her lips felt dry.

The rider did not reply. Instead he said, "Come and sit on our horses, we'll tie you securely; you won't fall. Don't be scared", he repeated.

"Where will you take us?" Lakhi asked from behind Ninni, in a loud, sharp voice.

Her eyes were wide, like saucers in her round tanned face. Her fingers clutched an arrow trembly.

An understanding smile came on to the rider's face; he touched his heel on the stomach of the horse and the horse advanced obediently.

"Stay where you are!" Ninni commanded. This time her voice came out sharp. Her lips felt drier.

The rider laughed out aloud; advancing on his horse, he tried to encircle the standing girl. Ninni, in the flicker of a second, put her bow on her shoulder, and let the arrow go. It hit the rider in his eyes. He doubled up with a big 'aah'.

Ninni put another arrow on her bow, as the other rider turned back his horse. Lakhi threw her spear after him, and it caught him in the back of his neck. Another arrow from Ninni put an end to the agony of the wounded rider. The horses, whining, cantered back rider-less.

Ninni stood still, staring at the corpses; there were tears on her long lashes. Lakhi came up from behind and shook her.

"Come let's run home and warn them that the Turks have come again."

She sat down to pull her spear out of the dead man, and pulled hard putting both her feet against the corpse. The spear came out, and along with it, a splutter of blood.

Ninni looked away. Lakhi stood up, holding her spear. She stretched her blood-stained palms and shuddered. "Let's first wash ourselves in the river", she said.

II

'Rai' was a small village on the border of what was then Gwalior state touching on the one side the outskirts of the city of Gwalior and on the other the small river 'Sank'; beyond lay the small state of Dholpur.

Dusk was falling as Ninni put down with a thump the big bundle of mixed farm and wheat flour roties.

Turning her head to look in the dark recesses of house, she called loudly. "How long will you take?"

No answer came, only the mustard oil lamp burned silently.

A little impatiently, Ninni said, "My brother, what are you doing in there—taking time to dress up like woman?"

There was frown between her shapely brows. A tall youth came out of the dark, windowless room.

"God, lass" he laughed, showing his white strong teeth, "bossing me again, aren't you?"

Ninni's lips twitched, as she suppressed a smile.

As they came out of the small, two roomed house, Ninni closed the ancient creaking doors, but before she could put on the latch, her brother put in a hand, stopping her.

"The burglars know that 'Rai' was plundered by Sikandar Lodi."

Even in the dark she could see the laughter in his eyes. The quiet night rang with their loud laughter, the deep baritone of Atal, and the high, ringing, sweet laughter of Ninni.

Once atop the 'Machan' on the outer corner of her field, Ninni coaxed her brother into sleep. With her primitive bow and arrow, she sat ready, to kill any beast that interfered with her growing property, be it a bear or a wild buffalo or may be just a humble jackal.

What if the invaders come again, she mused. Her heart gave a big lurch. "No, God, please don't let it happen again!"

She felt so happy, so much at peace with her simple routine of life, that the thought of the unruly life, spent hidden in the caves of the great jungle, filled her with dismay.

Even if they don't come, she thought, it was not safe now for her to go alone in the jungle on her



"God, lass" he laughed,

hunting expeditions; the women of the village said she was so beautiful, that the Muslim Sultan at Mandu had sent his men to kidnap her—the men Lakhi and she had killed.

Ninni shivered and moved closer to her sleeping brother. The night was getting chillier.

What if she had gone? A cold chill ran down Ninni's spine.

No—she would never, never go away—let the invaders come—she would face them: she was a 'Gujri'. Ninni clenched her teeth.

Her hand instinctively went up to her shoulder; as she suspected a sound on the other corner of the field. She sat up straight, put an arrow on her bow, breathed in, pulled it upto her ear, and let the arrow go. There was a hiss and a muffled sound in the dark. The arrow had found its mark.

Ninni, still seated in her 'machan', gave a shout "whoa, whoa, whoa"—to keep hungry jackals away from the dead beast.

Atal, by now wide awake, set up. "You shot it in the dark," He asked incredulously.

Ninni's white, even teeth gleamed in the night.

III

Ninni, as she was known, had the blood of the "Gujars" in her veins. 'Gujars', the ancient nomads who gradually settled down to a more stable way of life, tilling the soil, hunting, consuming some part of the flesh, and selling away the skin.

Ninni herself, young as she was, was a good markswoman. Tall and sturdy, she was fair, with dark, very dark eyes and hair. Her features were almost of Aryan perfection. High forehead, long straight nose, soft sweet mouth, and a firm chin, which denoted the strength of her character.

The most striking feature in her face, though was her eyes. Big, dark and fringed with thick long lashes: They, held a luminous expression.

It was high noon. Ninni came out of the room

that was her kitchen. She filled the brass vessel in her hand with water out of the mud pitcher, covered the pitcher again, and then, putting some water on her hand, started rubbing them vigorously, enjoying the tingling sound her glass bangles made.

The outer door of her house flew open with a bang. Ninni looked up with annoyance and saw her tall brother standing in the doorway, panting, excited, ready to burst out with some news.

As he opened his mouth to say something, Ninni said coolly, "First come and have lunch; plenty of time for village gossip later."

Atal's long, lean face flushed with annoyance as he said haughtily, "As if I am one of those gossip-mongering old women—God, Ninni, the things you say. It's all right if you don't want to listen to something very exciting that is happening; I don't mind."

He turned his face towards the mud wall, and stood with his arms folded.

Ninni with feigned concern went up to him, touched his shoulder and said, "What anger, brother! Won't you tell me about the exciting happening?"

Atal turned, the eager expression back in his eyes; again he opened his mouth to say something and closed it as he caught Ninni's eyes, bright with laughter. Eagerness in his own eyes died away.

"You are pulling my leg", he said accusingly. Now Ninni laughed out outright.

Atal looked grim, "you are younger than me, you know" he said, "you seem to forget it."

"I am not," Ninni said earnestly.

"Dada" I am your mother, father, sister, everything—mmm?

Atal nodded, his eyes full of affection, "What after you go away?"

"I am not going away, never!" Ninni said with the typical stubbornness of youth; "come have your lunch."

Atal gave a start, "O Ninni, I forget, we are to have our lunch, and go out to the "chaupal" to receive the Rajah; he is coming to see us—his people—and to hunt."

"To hunt?" Ninni said calmly, but her eyes had caught the spark of interest.

IV

Ninni headed the throng of women, standing a pace away from the men.

Women opened their veils, and started covering their faces, as the Rajah, along with his company, appeared out of the dust cloud raised by horses' hooves.

Ninni's face remained uncovered, she being a daughter of the village, Rajah Man Singh pulled the reins and the horse—a fine Arab Stallion—opped unwillingly, chewing at the rein.

A man came running from behind, and caught the horse, as Man Singh jumped down lightly.

Dark, he had fine expressive eyes, with a high forehead and a wide strong jawline. He was strongly built with broad shoulders and long legs.

Ninni looked—this is the Rajah—she was disappointed. But for his gorgeous dress, he looked like any other man.

"He has seven wives, they say, and he fights the Turks and defeats them."

Admiration, love and respect filled her heart as she stared at him, and then coyly withdrew her gaze, as she met the Royal eyes.

Man Singh stood, stupefied. Beauty, in its truest form, was present in this little village of 'Rai' with hardly a hundred residents.

Ninni's heart beat fast as she felt the Rajah's eyes on her. Her first reaction was that of deep

puzzled embarrassment. What would all the women of Rai and the other girls think? That she is making eyes at the Rajah.

She looked up in panic, her eyes holding an expression of frightened admonishment.

Man Singh looked amused, as he accepted her 'Arati' by letting her put the 'Tika' on his forehead. Ninni encircled her small earthen tray, with incense burning in it, thrice in front of him, and then threw the solitary flower in it, on his turban.

Thrown tremblingly, the flower fell down. Man Singh gave Ninni a small smile, as he stooped to pick up the fallen flower and retrieve it for his turban.

V

The next day was the one for hunting. Ninni was called to the Rajah's camp. The Rajah had heard of her superb marksmanship, and her adventure with the Muslim soldiers.

She went along with her brother, and was offered a horse. Ninni looked at her brother and said in a small voice,

"I don't ride."

"We will walk down to the "Sank", Your Majesty, as we do every day," Atal told Man Singh.

"But today, you must come with me," Man Singh smiled.

A man held the horse's head, as Ninni mounted. She muffed her first attempt, jarred her knee on the cantle with a force that made her wince, and very nearly toppled backwards. She tried again; this time she cleared the cantle but landed in the saddle with a thump that made the horse shift its stance, and blow through its nostrils, as if to say "What a clumsy female."

Instinctively she stretched a hand to pat the horse's neck, then caught the Rajah's eyes and reddened.

"What if I can't hit anything today," Ninni thought tremulously, as she sat alone on her 'machan' in the forest. The Rajah will think me the headman and the whole village a pack of liars. Then he won't look so admiringly at me."

She blushed, seated there, as she was all alone.

"Why does the Rajah look at me like that, be-



Man Singh stood, stupefied



She never liked to kill a deer;

cause I can shoot well, or because I have nice eyes and a fair complexion. But the city women and the Ranis, are so good-looking, and the Rajah has seen them all; then how can he think me beautiful? Besides," she thought grudgingly, "I have never seen myself, except in the trembling waters of 'Sank', and how can 'Sank' be true, when she is not even stable?"

The village women said she was beautiful, but what do they know of beauty, all of them dark, coarse, and sunburnt? Ninni wished like she never had for a mirror. She came out of her reverie at a slight sound; she closed her eyes for a second. "God, please let it go in peace!"

It was a running deer; Ninni relaxed her hands; she never liked to kill a deer. She waited: a group of cheetals passed; she waited, a throng of peacocks, clacking noisily, passed.

The drum beats of the 'Hanka' were coming closer. Then there was a sort of a growl; Ninni sat straight in a shooting position. It was a wild buffalo. She let the arrow go: it hit the animal in its neck, but not with enough force. Piercing

only the outer depths of the muscular neck, it hung perilously.

The buffalo groaned with pain; he looked to the side from where the arrow had come, and spotted Ninni. Snorting angrily, he charged the trunk of the tree on which Ninni's machan was placed. The tree shook ominously.

Another arrow from Ninni missed the charging 'Arana,' finding its target on a nearby tree; the buffalo, angrier, charged again. Ninni took up her spear and with a swing threw it, aiming at the buffalo's forehead.

It found its mark and went in between his eyes, breaking his skull bones. The 'Arana,' now too close to be shot at, swayed, but prepared for still another charge. On a wild impulse, Ninni jumped down from the machan.

She caught the swaying beast by its horns, and gave it a big push backwards. The buffalo fell back with a great thud, breathing its last, and Ninni not being able to stand the force, fell down on it.

She got up hurriedly, as she heard the sound of feet running behind her. Tidying her heavy skirt around her trim ankles, she looked around, as Man Singh came running with sword in hand.

Ninni stood looking down, with her back against a tree. Man Singh looked embarrassed at his own concern.

"I heard sounds and was worried," he said.

Man Singh, for once, looked lost. "You came down the machan to push the 'Arana' back with your hands?" Ninni nodded, her side turned to him. "You were not scared?" he smiled.

Ninni looked up, faintly surprised at the question. "I am never scared when I have to finish a job," she said.

The Rajah felt his voice tremble, "Should I propose he thought?

"It might be very improper to ask you," he said, "but will you marry me?"

Ninni's heart raced madly, as she turned her back towards him. "I can't live without my village, my river, my way of life," she said haltingly.

"I will take up the river through a canal; you don't have to observe purdah. I will bring you along with me on hunts," Man Singh said in one breath.

"Talk to my brother," Ninni breathed out softly.

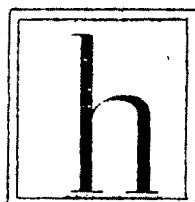
Silently, Man Singh stretched his palm; Ninni, looking at him sideways, with trembling lips, and a beating heart, put her dusty hand into it.

Rani Mrig Nayani, as Ninni was later known perhaps on account of her extraordinarily beautiful eyes, adorns the pages of Indian history as a very talented woman, who not only patronised some of the greatest musicians India has ever known but also inspired the composition of many 'Ragas.'

The India of Sir Walter Scott



IAN D. L. CLARK



IGH on the wall of St. Mark's Cathedral in Bangalore is a memorial tablet dedicated to "Sir Walter Scott of Abbotsford, Bart, 15th Hussars. Died 1847". Memory plays strange tricks, and although I have been a devotee of the great Scottish novelist since boyhood, I had forgotten that his eldest son died in India until I happened to glance up, on a recent visit, and noticed the familiar name and title. In my pocket, that morning, was a copy of one of the greatest of Sir Walter's novels, *Guy Mannering*, which I had brought with me to read on the train

journey to Madras. As the 'Brindavan Express' rumbled across the rocky tip of the Deccan I found myself re-reading the account of the duel between Colonel Mannering and young Bertram, heir of the dispossessed Ellangowan estate, which Scott had set somewhere out in that forbidding landscape. By a grim irony of history the far-away outpost of Empire in which Colonel Mannering fought with the Mahrattas, "relieved Cudlieburn, and defended Chingalore, and defeated the great chief, Ram Jolli Bundleman" in the novel, was to see the death of the novelist's own son and heir only twenty years later.

For Scott, the uncompromising Tory who died in the year of the 1832 Reform Bill and bitterly

resented the spread of subversive 'Whig' democracy, India was a romantic far-off land to which his 18th century heroes were despatched to win glory and renown in war before returning to Scotland to recover a lost title or win the hand of a wealthy heiress, just as later in the century Thackeray was to make one of his most colourful characters a 'nabob' merchant who returned to England with a digestion ruined by years of hot curries but a fabulous fortune to make up for it. Scott, too, has his Nabob—the fiery, demanding Mr. Touchwood in *St. Ronan's Well*, full of culinary foibles picked up in the East, whose bones and joints, roasted in the heat of the Tropics, creak and groan in the damp foggy gloom of his native Scotland. Touchwood is always able to paralyse any conversation by using the privilege of a returned traveller to tell highly colourful and often incredible tales of what he had seen and heard 'out East'. Yet Scott's India is not merely a cardboard back-drop : behind the glamour and romance of a far-away continent he was aware of the contrast of cultures and the hidden depths of a people whom his own countrymen could only very partially understand. Lucy Mannering, the English Colonel's daughter, was born and brought up in India. Writing to her friend Matilda Mervyn she recalls the mysterious tales she heard in childhood and compares them with the "gaudy frippery" of the French romances on which a well-bred English maiden was nurtured:—

"O Matilda, I wish you could have seen the dusky visages of my Indian attendants, bending in earnest devotion round the magic narrative, that 'flowed,' half poetry, half prose, from the lips of the tale-teller! No wonder that European fiction sounds cold and meagre, after the wonderful effects which I have seen the romances of the East produce upon their hearers".

And it was "a little Hindu air", played under her window upon a flageolet, which informed her that her lover (whom she thought had died in a duel in India) had come to claim her.

Sir Walter Scott of course never visited India, and the references to India in his novels reflect the frankly romantic misconceptions of his time. He would unhesitatingly be labelled an 'Imperialist' today. It is therefore all the more surprising that his novels should have made a deep impression upon Indian readers. Bankim Chandra Chatterji's debt to Scott was open and acknowledged, as was that of Rabindranath Tagore's elder brother, 'Borodada' Dwijendranath. The latter's attachment to Scott is mentioned by C.F. Andrews, who spent much of his life off and on at Santiniketan, and knew the Tagore family intimately. As a boy in the smoky industrial city of Birmingham, Andrews had found in Scott's novels about the Highlands of Scotland a whole new world of romance and poetry ; and it was from Scott that he absorbed that intense love of nature and scenery which remained with him all his life, and also the moral idealism which permeates Scott's writings. "The Romance of his stories was pure and noble", he writes, "and it set me a high standard at the very beginning of my thinking days." Tastes differ, and it is precisely this moralism which many modern readers find difficult to stomach. However on Andrews it made its mark. Imagine his surprise when thousands of miles away, in the heart of Bengal, he found a kindred admirer of Scott. 'Borodada', he says, "was never tired of speaking to me in his old age about the effect that Scott's novels had on him when he was young. Though he had spent his whole life in Bengal, and had never visited Scotland, the Highlands were to

him a land of enchantment and delight because of the spell which the great novelist had put upon him. We came together intimately on this common ground of our early dreams".

Andrews returned to the same theme in *India and Britain*, which he wrote in 1935 in the form of a dialogue between himself and a group of Indian and British students at Oxford. The purpose of the book was to ventilate some of the causes of tension between the two countries, and to put before British readers the Indian point of view about the Independence Movement. At one point, 'Anil Bose', one of the characters in the dialogue, quotes a passage from Rabindranath Tagore, in which the poet expresses admiration for the liberal tradition in English literature, and cites the "love for humanity, freedom and justice" enshrined in the poetry of Shelley and Wordsworth. Andrews breaks in to remind the students that Tagore's elder brother, even when full of indignation at the wrongs his country was enduring, used to make an exception in the case of Shakespeare, Dickens and Scott : "For these British authors were kindred spirits. They were his very own. They stood out clearly on his side in all his highest ideals. He could appeal to them, direct against the acts of repression which were being committed in Bengal. Scott was an ardent Tory, but he loved liberty, and what a gentleman he was!"

It is curious to find Scott being claimed as a kindred spirit by Tagore, and one wonders what precisely were the qualities in this alien Tory novelist which appealed to the men of the 'Bengal Renaissance'. Although Scott's greatest gift was his ability to penetrate and evoke the atmosphere of distant historical periods (for example in *The Talisman* and *Ivanhoe*), and to tell a tale excitingly, it has to be admitted that much of his prose is intolerably prolix and sometimes his plots are sloppily constructed. It is well known that towards the end of his life he wrote far beyond the limit of his powers to clear the enormous debt of £130,000 which hung round his neck after the failure of his publishers, yet even this hardly excuses the famous scene in *The Antiquary* in which a magnificently described sunset unfortunately occurs in the East instead of the West ! Moreover, it has often been pointed out that his upper-class hero and heroines are mere cardboard figures, too good to be true, who lack any kind of contact with real life.

Yet the genius of Scott shines through even the most flabby of his tales ; and in particular there are two qualities which give his writings a universal appeal. In a recent book, *The Achievement of Walter Scott*, Mr. Cockshut has drawn attention to Scott's superb sense of historical change and the corresponding clash of cultural patterns in the Scotland of his day. He felt in his own bones the tension between the old loyalties and the new, and this comes out very clearly in *Waverley*, *Rob Roy* and *Redgauntlet*, which all reflect the nostalgic appeal of the Stewart dynasty, providing a focus for Scottish nationality and cultural identity in 18th century Scotland, against the background of economic progress and social change. This is not just the romantic appeal of a 'lost cause', but a skilful analysis of the meaning of defeat and the social stresses and strains set up by the onward movement of history. Scott himself was born in the 18th century and as a boy he ran wild in the hills of Lowland Scotland, where the old ways were still preserved and the uncompromising brand of Scottish Calvinism was still a living force. As an adult his post in the Court of Session brought him into close contact with the brilliant world of the Edinburgh lawyers and

writers of the 'Golden Age' of the 'Athens of the North'; and later his position as Laird of Abbotsford and Sheriff of a lowland County brought him close to the titled world of the Scottish aristocracy and landed class. Yet during his own lifetime the backlash of the French Revolution was profoundly altering the social structure of his country, and the development of communications and industrialisation was bringing the old order to an end. Something of all this is reflected in his novels about the 18th century; and although the subject-matter is Scottish, the themes which he touches upon are universal. As the old sense of national cultural identity is threatened, what new focus is to replace it?

The second quality which Scott knew how to exploit to the full was his ability to sum up, in an unforgettable series of characters, the basic traits of his own people. He has often been accused of producing mere caricatures; but caricature is, after all, only truth drawing attention to itself by exaggeration. Unfortunately the Scots dialect, which Sir Walter reproduces so faithfully, sometimes makes it hard for anyone but a Scot really to appreciate the flavour of an Edie Ochiltree or a Meg Merrilles, a Dandie Dinmont or a Wandering Willie. These persons embody values which were passing away at the end of the 18th century: loyalty, independence, rugged endurance, self-respect, painfully acquired learning, and religious faith. They seem to grow out of the landscape and epitomise the distinctive characteristics of the people. Even the most grotesque, such as the pedantic Dominie Sampson or the litigious Peter Feebles, are recognisable embodiments of the soil from which they spring. It is into their mouths, rather than on the lips of his more 'gentle' characters, that Scott puts his most profound observation of the cultural crisis through which his land was passing; and it is they who exercise the democratic freedom of the old Scotland.

to mock and sadly chide the foibles and obtuseness of their social superiors. Sometimes this is humorously done, as in the case of Edie Ochiltree's gentle leg-pulling of the Laird of Monkbarns. Sometimes there is a much sharper note of social commentary, as a Meg Merrilles' denunciation of the foolishly tyrannical Bertram of Ellangowan, or in the scene in *The Antiquary* between Jonathan Oldbuck and the fisherman Mucklebacti, whose son had been drowned at sea the night before. As the fisherman mends his shattered boat on the bank, the morning after the tragedy, the kindly and well-meaning landlord congratulates him on being able to bring himself to return to his work so soon, to which he receives the devastating and unanswerable retort:

"And what would you have me to do, unless I wanted to see four children starve, because aye is drowned? It's weel wi'you gentles, that can sit in the house wi'handkercher at your een when ye lose a friend: but the like of us maun to our wark again, if our hearts were beating as hard as my hammer."

This is no romantic sentimentality, but a genuine observation of the realities of life and death in a peasant society, valid the world over.

Finally, there is one supreme gift which Scott possessed, which is all too rare among his literary successors. He makes us laugh. However hard he tries to write a lofty and inflated tale, sooner or later he sees the funny side. He laughs at his own countrymen, because he is one of them and he loves them; he laughs at himself (in *The Antiquary*) because he has caught a glimpse of himself in the mirror. He laughs tolerantly at the religious extremism of his forebears, because he knows that laughter is the only effective weapon left against fanaticism, whether religious or political. The only things he never laughs at are loyalty, goodness and self-sacrifice, because he knew that these things are rare and precious in his own and every land.

Photograph taken by Samarendra Chaudhury in Kashmir.



ANIL CHANDRA BANERJEE

ON

GURU NANAK



GURU NANAK, the founder of Sikhism, was born 500 years ago—in 1469 A.D. in the small village of Talwandi in the district of Lahore (now in Pakistan) in a lower middle class family. He died in 1538 A.D., leaving behind him a small but integrated community of disciples (Sikhs) and a new faith cut off from traditional Hinduism. The impact of history brought this faith into open conflict with the Mughal regime. This conflict led in the 18th century to the emergence of the Punjab as an independent State under Sikh rule which collapsed a century later under British blows. No other religious reformer of India (there were many of them during the mediaeval period) contributed so much to the shaping of the country's history. Not without reason is the great reformer's 500th birth anniversary being celebrated in different parts of India during the current year.

(1)

Guru Nanak was born in a caste-ridden society devoted to a ritual-ridden religion. How, he asked himself, was salvation to be obtained?

In Hindu society caste and religion have been inseparable since time immemorial. That caste should be looked upon as a problem—that it was not a necessary and inescapable feature of social organisation—became clear to some Hindu religious teachers of South India as a result of the impact of Islam which demonstrated the possibility of casteless society. Ramanuja barely touched the fringe of the problem. Ramananda tried to grapple with it and carried his ideas to North India where reformers like Kabir popularised them.

In studying Guru Nanak's attitude to the caste system we cannot ignore the background created by the teachings of reformers like Ramananda and Kabir, nor can we overlook the influence of Islam which had been an active force in the socio-religious set-up in the Punjab for several centuries. Possibly the teachings of Ramananda and Kabir had little direct effect on the development of his ideas as we shall see later; but they had released forces of liberalism which must have penetrated into the Punjab. How far the Guru was actually influenced by Islam is a controversial issue, and the story of his visit to Mecca, Medina and Baghdad has recently been rejected as unauthentic. But there is no denying the fact that he was born in the Punjab and lived

for about fifty years in that province which was among the earliest homes of Islam in India. The traditional stories of his association with Faqirs in the Punjab cannot be entirely ignored, and he must have met many Muslim saints in the course of his travels in India even if he did not leave the borders of the country. The existence of a casteless society, side by side with a caste-ridden society, must have made a deep impression on his sensitive and receptive mind.

Much more important than external influence was his basic spiritual approach towards the problems of human life. Guru Nanak was not a social reformer in the ordinary sense of that term. He did not aim directly and specifically at removal of social injustice. His purpose was to lay down a track for man's spiritual journey. For admission to that track no social qualifications—no high rank in the social hierarchy—would be needed; a craving for spiritual bliss would be the only passport. In pursuing that track it would be necessary for man to drop his inherited social prejudices. Such a spiritual venture would in itself be a social revolution. And there could be no social revolution in India without considerable erosion—if not total elimination—of the caste system which crippled human dignity and formed a dyke against spiritual regeneration.

From this point of view it is easy to understand the well known remark of the Sikh saint Bhai Gurdas: "Guru Nanak had reduced the four castes into one". If we take this statement in a literal sense it would imply formation of a casteless Sikh society, based on removal of traditional restrictions such as prohibition of inter-marriage and of eating in common. There are difficulties in the way of accepting the proposition that such a society actually emerged in Guru Nanak's lifetime. If the four castes had really been reduced into one in the days of Guru Nanak, some of the reforms of Guru Gobind Singh would hardly have been necessary. He said: "Let men of the four castes receive my baptism, eat out of one dish, and feel no disgust or contempt for one another." It would appear that only those who received his baptism would be liberated from caste prejudices. Cunningham wrote that "Govind abolished caste rather by implication than by a direct enactment". If Forster's statement is to be believed, the tenth Guru's injunction ceased to be effective in the eighties of the 18th century. He wrote that "the Sikhs formed matrimonial connections only within their respective tribes".

WHO ACHIEVED A REVOLUTION THROUGH REFORM

Such difficulties would not arise if we take the statement of Bhai Gurdas in a religious sense; by reduction of four castes he meant—not the removal of the traditional classification or of external social distinctions—but the elimination of caste as a factor in spiritual life. Ramanuja had reserved spiritual bliss for the first three castes: "Not for the Sudra is the grace of God available in this life. By dutiful conduct he may work his way up to another birth in which he may be admitted to the study of the Vedas which is indispensable for the saving knowledge". Guru Nanak recognised no such restriction based on birth. In his view every man, irrespective of his position in the caste hierarchy was eligible for salvation: those who took shelter in God were equals. He said:

"Perceive (in all men) for in the hereafter there is no caste". He added, Caste and status are futile, for the One (Lord) watches over all."

Behind these sayings lay the revolutionary principle that the worth of a man was to be judged solely by the intensity of his devotion to God; the creator did not look upon caste as a test. Although the application of this principle was limited in the first instance to the world of religion, it could not but have a powerful impact on society as a whole as a necessary consequence. Complete elimination of a system which was the very basis of Hindu society was extremely difficult, if not impossible; but orthodoxy could hardly resist a breach in the citadel. Thus Guru Nanak prepared the ground for a social revolution even though he did not directly and deliberately initiate it.

In this connection a reference should be made to a characteristic Sikh institution, the *Langar* or free kitchen. According to the generally accepted tradition it was set on foot by Guru Nanak and expanded by his immediate successors, Guru Angad and Guru Amar Das. The system represented two important points in Guru Nanak's teachings: denunciation of asceticism and importance of '*dan*'. He said: "He who eats what he has earned by his own labour and gives some (to others)—Nanak, he it is who knows the true way". Apart from the religious aspect, both these points strengthened the trends towards the development of a new social structure. What we call dignity of labour was promoted and the individual's responsibility of contributing to social welfare was emphasized. Moreover, it was through the system of '*dan*' that the *Langar* system

developed. All those who came to take their food in the *Langar* had to take it together, irrespective of caste or creed. It was a direct blow at the caste system. It was also a direct incentive to promotion of fraternity and social solidarity. Here we see how ideas propounded by Guru Nanak primarily from the spiritual point of view contributed to social reform.

One social evil, caused directly by the weakness of the Lodi regime and indirectly by the decay of religion, was the widespread practice of bribery. Guru Nanak said:

"Compassion is not exercised by merely beholding a suitor

There is no one who receiveth or giveth not bribes.

The King dispensemeth justice when his palm is filled."

This was quite natural in an age when, as the Guru said, "King's are butchers". By drawing pointed attention to this evil practice Guru Nanak showed how he shared the common man's feelings and grievances, for it is the common man on whom this practice must have pressed very hard. He could suggest no direct remedy, but he tried to strike at the root of the evil by saying: "He who eats what he has earned by his own labour.....he it is who knows the true way".

(II)

The keynote of the religious problems of Guru Nanak's age was most strikingly expressed in the famous pronouncement attributed to him: "There is neither Hindu nor Mussalman". According to Macauliffe, "the Sikhs interpret this to mean generally that both Hindus and Muhammadans had forgotten the precepts of their religions." This was the product, as Teja Singh says, of "the very peculiar turn of their mind, with which they would take those things as ends in themselves which were originally intended only as means". In other words, rituals were confused with religion.

Guru Nanak's condemnation of the traditional rituals was practically unqualified. He recognised that 'some little honour' might be obtained through the performance of 'pilgrimage, austerities, mercy, and alms-giving on general and special occasions', but the far better method of washing off impurity was to 'hear, obey and love God'. In general he prescribed God's name as 'the best thing' in 'this Kal age'.

On idolatry he said: "Blind and dumb (they, i.e., the Hindus, walk) in pitch darkness, worshiping this ridiculous stone which they have set up. It sinks, so how can it carry you across (the Ocean of Existence)?"

On bathing at places of pilgrimage the Guru said: "A sadhu possesses goodness even if he does not bathe and a thief, even if he bathes, remains a thief."

On the futility of the current ascetic practices the Guru said: "He who sings songs about God without understanding them; who converts his house into a mosque in order to satisfy his hunger; who, being unemployed, has his ears pierced (so that he can beg as a yogi); who becomes a faqir and abandons his caste; who is called a *guru* or *pir* but who goes around begging never fall at the feet of such a person."

To 'abide pure amid the impurities of the world' was 'to find the way of religion': "Religion

consisteth not in a patched coat, or in a Jogi's staff, or in ashes smeared over the body; Religion consisteth not in a earrings worn, or a shaven head, or in the blowing of horns; Religion consisteth not in mere words. And he added, "Religion consisteth not in wandering to tombs or places of cremation, or sitting in attitudes of contemplation;

Religion consisteth not in wandering in foreign countries, or in bathing at places of pilgrimages."

The conventional conformity with rituals, which was the bane of religious life in Guru Nanak's age, was due primarily to the disappearance of the fundamental idea of the unity of God. "Avatars and divinities, prophets and saints, pirs and dargahs obscured the vision of men, dividing them into irreconcilable and often actively hostile groups and destroying the very bedrock of all true religious belief." The Guru attacked this problem with a view to establishing the great truth: God is One (*Ek*) and "there is no other."

The doctrine of *avatars* played a vital role in Vaishnava philosophy which directed the *bhakti* of the devotees to Krishna, an *avatar* of God. But in the case of Guru Nanak *bhakti* was directed to God Himself and there was no room in his system of thought for any manifestation of God. His concept of God as *niranjan, achal, atit, alipt, niralep, ajuni* could not accommodate any *avatar*. He said: "Nanak in comparison with the Fearless, Formless One, innumerable Raṁs are as dust."

The question whether Guru Nanak recognised some Hindu divinities is a controversial one; the answer depends upon a correct translation of two passages in the *Japji*. The controversy would, however, lose much of its importance if we could place it in the context of the Guru's unmistakable and reiterated emphasis on the unity of God. The Guru spoke of 'three approved disciples, one the creator of the world; one the sustainer, and one who exercises the authority of death'. These 'three approved disciples' apparently corresponded to the Hindu Trinity: Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. But the Guru did not recognise any difference between them, on the basis of their functions. He said: "He who created also destroys; apart from him there is no other. Having destroyed He builds, and having built He destroys. Casting down he raises up and raising up he casts down."

The supremacy of the One True Lord was unequivocally stated: "Thou didst create Brahma, Visnu and Siva"

While referring to the One True Lord the Guru did not hesitate to use different Hindu and Muslim names, such as Hari, Ram, Gopal, Allah, Khuda and Sahib; but he said: "My Master is the One, He is the One, brother; and he alone exists".

The Guru's statement on the Prophet of Islam falls in the same category as his views of Hindu *avatars* and divinities: "There are hundreds of thousands of Muhammads but only one God. And he added, "Many Muhammads stand in His court. So numberless they cannot be reckoned."

The purpose of the Guru was to bring man face to face with the Supreme Being; there was no room for intermediaries like *avatars* and 'prophets' or even for scriptures like the Vedas and the Quran. The reading of the Vedas, he said, was 'a secular occupation'. Again: "God's secret is not to be found in the Vedas or the books of the Mussalmans." The profit obtained from repeating the Smritis could be 'obtained in one gharī by remembering the Name which conferreth greatness.'

The greatest barrier between man and the

Supreme Being was *Maya*, not in the Vedantic sense of *illusion* (implying that the visible world was unreal) but in the special sense of delusion (implying that the visible world was real but impermanent). He who accepted the impermanent world as a source of pleasure and enjoyment was a victim of *Maya* and had no entry to the Court of God. "*Maya* is that by which man forgets God, a false attachment is produced in him, and he begins to love something else in the place of God." Separated from God by *Maya*, man had to pass through the painful process of transmigration. He must choose between *Maya* or darkness and untruth (*anjan* or black collyrium applied to the eyes) on the one hand, and God (*nir-anjan*, One wholly apart from all that is dark and untrue) on the other. In the right choice lies his prospect of salvation. "*Maya's* disciple is false; he abhors the Truth. Bound up in duality he transmigrates."

III

Guru Nanak delivered a powerful challenge to traditional Hinduism as it was actually practised in his days. He was, however, not a pioneer in this respect. His role as a religious teacher cannot be isolated from what may be called the 'Mediaeval Reformation'. This term connotes a general movement covering a period of several centuries and composed of distinct strands of ideas and practices. What gave this movement a basic unity was the cult of *bhakti* or loving adoration of God.

The movement originated in South India and was to some extent orthodox Hindu society's response to the challenge of Islam. On the west coast of India—in the Malabar region—Islam was in a flourishing condition in the 9th century. It is not altogether unlikely that Sankaracharya's Hindu revivalist movement directed against decadent Buddhism was somehow connected with the appearance of an alien faith in his homeland. But a direct crusade against Islam was probably uncalled for in his lifetime; he might have hoped that the revival of Brahmanism and the elimination of its indigenous rival would curb the influence and restrain the zeal of the Muslim missionaries. If he really had any such hope it was not fulfilled. His philosophical approach did not bring Hinduism to the level of a popular religion, understood and appreciated by the masses to whom the simple democratic creed of Islam naturally made a powerful appeal. Muslim travellers visiting South India in the 13th and 14th centuries refer to the increasing number and influence of the followers of Islam. What the crisis confronting Hinduism called for was a simplified version of Hinduism eliminating doctrinal intricacies and social injustices which had been alienating the masses from their ancestral faith. The *bhakti* cult served this socio-religious purpose.

The first steps towards the development of this cult within the structure of Vaishnavism (built up earlier by the Alvars) were taken by Ramanuja who probably flourished in the 11th century. He replaced Sankaracharya's doctrine of monism by the doctrine of dualism and declared that *bhakti* provided the royal road to salvation. One of the most remarkable features of the new cult was that it paved the way for liberalisation of society. The old privileges of the higher castes could not be completely swept away, but the Sudras and the so-called 'untouchables' received a recognised status within the fold of religion. Ramanuja made religious instruction available to them; they were allowed to attend certain temples on particular

days in the year. Viewed in the context of the prevailing social rigidity, these were not negligible concessions.

Ramanuja, however, did not go far enough. It was Ramananda, an adherent to the Ramanuja school, who offered more generous recognition to the spirit of the age. He admitted to his sect disciples from all castes, even from Muslims, and called them 'the liberated'. As a systematic expounder and propagator of the *bhakti* cult he deemed forms of adoration superfluous, and held that the supreme reward of devotion was to be obtained by incessantly uttering God's name." The simplification of worship and the liberalisation of the traditional caste rules were Ramananda's most important contributions to the solution of the religious problems of his day. He had closer contact with Islam than Ramanuja. At Benaras, says Macauliffe, he came in contact with 'learned Mussalmans'. The influence of Islam was probably not an unimportant factor in the development of his ideas.

Ramananda has been rightly described as 'the bridge between the *bhakti* movement of the South and the North'. The traditional view is that in North India his teaching found a great vehicle in Kabir who himself says that he was 'awakened' by Ramananda. It has also been suggested that "the echo of Kabir's teachings had reached even the Land of the Five Rivers and that for many of his ideas Nanak was indebted to that great teacher." There are chronological difficulties in the way of accepting these conjectural views. Whatever one might say about Kabir's debt to Ramananda, it is hardly possible to establish any positive link between Kabir and Guru Nanak.

Two points, however, deserve consideration in this connection. First, Guru Nanak must have absorbed fresh ideas in the course of his travels in different parts of India; the world which he saw had advanced to some extent along the liberal track laid by Ramananda. Secondly, Ramananda and his followers—especially Kabir—certainly played a recognised role in Sikh religious tradition. This is proved by the inclusion of their hymns in the *Adi Granth*. Only one hymn attributed to Ramananda has found place in the Holy Book, but it has a typical affinity with the teachings of the Sikh Gurus. Among the non-Sikh *Bhagats* Kabir was given the place of honour in the *Adi Granth*; the English translation of his verses covers 175 pages of Macauliffe's book.

The number and variety of non-Sikh *Bhagats'* hymns incorporated in the *Adi Granth* show to what extent Sikhism was in fruitful contact with the Mediaeval Reformation in its different aspects. Whether that contact was established by Guru Nanak himself cannot perhaps be precisely determined; but it is hardly possible that his successors attached so much importance to the voice of the *Bhagats* purely on their own initiative, without guidance at least from oral tradition going back to the first Guru's days. The *Bhagats* belonged almost to all communities, castes and provinces. Their message had a cosmopolitan character. There was a general uniformity in their views on social and religious problems. As one goes through their verses one feels one is not far off from the compositions of Guru Nanak. Even in mediaeval India ideas were not static; they moved and succumbed to absorption wherever the atmosphere was congenial.

(IV)

It has been pointed out above that Guru Nanak emphasized the unity of God and sought to bring man face to face with Him. There were hurdles to

be crossed before mystical union with God—the climax of spiritual progress—could be attained. *Maya* dragged man's attention to the impermanent world of attractive snares. "As iron is thrown into a furnace, melted, and recast: so is he who fastens his affections on *Maya* incarnated again and again." The 'man'—a word with a complex connotation, imperfectly translated as 'mind'—was 'unsteady' and did not 'know the way.' Then again, through the influence of '*haumai*' (pride, or ego, or self-centredness) man "transmigrates and wanders in doubt."

"How shall deliverance be obtained?"

To this crucial question Guru Nanak had a simple answer. "For a diseased world the remedy is the Name", said the Guru. To this all-important word 'Name' different meanings were attached in different contexts. Sometimes it meant 'God Himself', sometimes 'God as revealed', and sometimes 'the Word (*Sabad*)'. No one could be imbued with the true love of the 'Name' without instruction from the 'Guru': "None has realised God without the true Guru; without the true Guru, none". Once again we have a word with a complex connotation. "The Guru is God; the Guru is the voice of God; and the Guru is the word, the Truth of God". The influence of *Karma* was recognised so far as it determined a favourable or unfavourable birth; but the principal determining factor in man's quest for salvation was the divine grace (*nazar*): "It is through grace that the door of salvation is found".

One who condemned conventional rituals so unreservedly as Guru Nanak could not be expected to prescribe complicated religious ceremonies for his followers. He recommended *nam japan* or 'repetition of the Name' and *nam simaran* or 'remembering the Name'. In neither case was it to be a mere mechanical process. There was to be no asceticism; one should eat what one had earned by his own labour and give some to others. In this recommendation for 'giving some to others' we have the origin of the practice of '*dan*'. Whether '*isnan*', in the sense of bathing as a cleansing and purifying act, formed part of Guru Nanak's injunctions is not quite clear, although Bhai Gurdas seems to imply that '*nam*', '*dan*' and '*isnan*' stand for the entire message delivered by Guru Nanak for the uplift of mankind.

Two important features of Guru Nanak's teachings distinguish them from those of other mediaeval reformers. First, they had the qualities of precision and directness which were lacking in the mystical utterances of Kabir and others. Instead of releasing floating ideas which held the ordinary mind in a mystic grip but did not activise it, the Guru told the people what to aim at and how to proceed. This aspect of Guru Nanak's missionary work must be regarded as a primary factor in the development of Sikhism as a faith with a distinct individuality, providing a basis for a socio-religious organisation (*Panth*) with a personality of its own. Had the Guru's message lacked those qualities, it is more than probable that his followers would have survived as a very minor—almost unnoticed—sect like the Kabirpanthis, virtually submerged under the tide of Hinduism. The creed laid down by the Guru was simple; it was to some extent rigid (simplicity often implies some amount of rigidity), but it was elastic enough to provide a structure within which the Sikh community could grow for more than a century and a half till an entirely new environment called for the reforms introduced by Guru Gobind Singh. As history shows, the teachings of other mediaeval reformers did not provide

any such opportunity for growth ; they created sects which were swallowed up by Hinduism.

The second point to be noticed is the originality of Guru Nanak's teachings in at least two vital respects. His renunciation of asceticism was a significant breach with Indian religious tradition. Religion for householders had, of course, been distinguished from religion for *Sannyasis* from time immemorial ; but religious teachers always played the role of ascetics, guiding their followers from a distance. It was not recognised that the *Guru* and *Chelas* could form an integrated community. Kabir anticipated the Sikh Guru, but his example did not not consolidate itself into a tradition. Although Guru Nanak came into contact with many ascetics—both Hindu and Muslim—during the two decades of his wandering life, he resumed his family ties when he settled down at Kartarpur, as we learn from Bhai Gurdas, and it is not unlikely that he even joined his followers in their daily labours in pursuance of his own precept of the need to earn one's own living. His preference for the householder's life was indicated also by his choice of Angad, a house-holder with wife and children, as his successor in preference to his own eldest son Sri Chand whose character was marked by other-worldliness. It was a revolutionary as also a decisive step. By barring the door to asceticism for the Gurus he made Sikhism a house-holders' religion in a special sense. The Gurus lived the

same life as their disciples did ; they shared their joys and sorrows. The human side of their character gave a new tone and intensity to their spiritual leadership. It was an excellent way of promoting solidarity within the community.

A no less vital aspect of Guru Nanak's originality was the establishment of Guruship as a continuing institution. The concept of Guruship was very familiar in Hindu religious tradition. A hierarchical chain of preceptors (*pir*, *shaikh*, *imām*, *qutb*) was known to Islam. But Guru Nanak gave Guruship a new form and content. By nominating Angad as successor he established a precedent and initiated a tradition which moulded the Sikhs into an integrated community under uninterrupted spiritual leadership as nothing else could have done. In this revolutionary step he was not anticipated or followed by any other mediaeval reformer. Trumpp rightly says that "the disciples of Nanak would no doubt have soon dispersed, and gradually disappeared, as well as the disciples of many other Gurus before Nanak, if he had not taken care to appoint a successor before his death". It was the crucial starting point of the separation of the Guru's disciples from the general body of Hindus. Guru Nanak resembled other mediaeval reformers in revitalising religion and morality ; but he was alone in creating a distinct and self-conscious socio-religious community which was destined to play a fruitful and glorious rôle in his country's history.



[Signature]
22/2/66
7/21



It is just before day-break. The place is lonesome. A river flows at a distance. A jackal calls nearby. In the centre there seems to be a raised platform which in fact is a marble pedestal without a statue on it. An emaciated lady is seen approaching the pedestal with an earthen lamp in her hand. She places the lamp at the foot of the pedestal. In the dim light the inscription is visible : "Here once lived a race known as Bengalee."

She waits. Then a saintly looking man appears.
He is Valmiki.

Lady: So you come, father.

Valmiki: Yes mother, but to compose the Ramayana you speak of is beyond my power.

Lady: Why father?

Val.: I am in a fix.

Lady: What's it?

Val.:

In the first Ramavana I had to deal with one Ravana, but I find hundreds and thousands of Ravanas to cope with now. The old Ramayana had one Sita, but now I can hear in every household the piteous cries of many Sitas.

[Cries are heard. Enter Vidyasagar.]

Vidyasagar:

I wish I had never fought for widow remarriage. Now they are remarrying even in their husband's presence.

[Enter Michael]

Michael:

"Lured by the charm of aspiration,
I ponder what I gain;
The stream of life is flowing to its
doom
How can I turn back again?"

Vid:

What brings you here at this hour?
I am rather disturbed in mind.

- Mich : I am no better, Vidyasagar. Do you read modern Bengali poetry?
- Vid : I do not think it necessary. Moreover, Bengal has boycotted me. You know I took great pains to write the Bengali First Book? They have rejected my First Book, you know what result.
- Boys get plucked in Bengali in the University Examinations.
- Mich : Look at the modern poets. . . .
- Vid : I don't want to hear. It's a sin to hear about it.
- (Michael takes a few swigs from a phial).
- Vid : Oh, again? It stinks.
- Mich : It is country liquor, Sir. We are independent now. No foreign liquors.
- Vid : It is a lie. Go to big hotels or rich men's mansions and you will see foreign liquor flowing like water.
- [Enter two youths]
- 1st youth : What do you think of the latest dance hit by Jayanti? It quite upset me.
- 2nd youth : Oh, I appreciate her frock. Particularly its translucence. And of course her legs.
- 1st youth : Sorry, I forgot today was the day for drawing our rations.
- 2nd youth : It's too late now—the shop's closed. That's immaterial. I've spent the money on the picture. But what shall I do? They will make a hell if I go without the rations.
- 2nd youth : All right, come with me, I'll tell you what to do.
- 1st youth : Where?
- 2nd youth : To the betel shop. You take a glass, and see the result. No cares, no anxieties. Besides, if you smell of liquor, they won't come near you.
- (Exit youths)
- Michael : Did you hear that?
- Vid : Yes, I did. The country is doomed. There is none who can prevent it.
- Mich : Don't utter it—you will be arrested and sent to prison. Well, give me some money. I have got to do something about my parched throat.
- Vid : How much?
- Mich : At least two rupees. Enough for a bottle of illicit brew.
- Vid : Don't go that way. The police are vigilant.
- Mich : Oh-oh-oh Police! I will manage that.
- (Exit Michael and Vidyasagar. Enter one gentleman and a beautiful lady).
- Lady : I will manage it—that's none of your business.
- Gentleman : That I know, Sati—you are my wife. Who else is there I can call mine in this crisis?
- Lady : But I must have a car. Certainly.
- Lady : The only trouble is that the man is a Bengalee.
- Gent. : He is a fool. One or two visits to the hotel will make it clear to you. Keep Mr. Sinha completely ignorant of the fact that you are my wife.
- Lady : Gent. : Lady :
- Yes, it will never be disclosed to him. There comes Mr. Sinha.
- (Enter Mr. Sinha, smoking a cigarette through a long pipe. A crude, suited figure).
- Gentleman : Good Morning Mr. Sinha, here is Mrs. Karabi Dutt of whom I spoke to you.
- Mr. Sinha : Very good.
- Lady : Good morning.
- Mr. Sinha : I want a private secretary, Ma'm I think you have heard everything from this gentleman.
- Lady : Yes I have. But I have a complaint against you.
- Mr. Sinha : Complaint, you mean?
- Lady : Don't Ma'm me—I am not that old.
- Mr. Sinha : All right.
- Gentleman : Sir, what about the contracts?
- Mr. Sinha : You will get them.
- Lady : Really, Mr. Sinha, the gentleman is very much anxious for the contract. The whole thing is in your control and your patronage will be of much help to him.
- Mr. Sinha : Sure, sure, I will see to it. See me to-morrow at my office. Good-bye.
- [Exit Mr. Sinha with the lady]
- [Enter Chandidas]
- Chandidas : "My beloved goes astray, . . ." She is gone; such is the way of the world. Only, they slandered my Rami. Modern Ramis go Scot free.
- [Enter Michael]
- Mich : It is very true. Thakur, My Rebeca also left me one day never to return. Once a deserter, always a deserter.
- [The gentleman looks enquiringly.]
- Gentleman : You mean my Sati won't return to me?
- Mich : She will, but under a contract which you wanted to get.
- Vid : [Enter Vidyasagar]
- Come along, come along Michael. Don't talk with that wretch. It is a sin to see the face of one who sells his wife for a little personal gain. Come along.
- [Exit Vidyasagar]
- Gentleman : But Thakur, It is you who wrote "Man above all. . . ."
- Chandidas : What I wrote is not true to-day, brother. Don't you see people dying in the streets like cats and dogs, and no body cares for it. All right, so long.
- [Exit Chandidas & Re-enter lady]
- Gent. : How come, Sati, you return so soon? I came to tell you that I shall be off again.
- Lady : Off again?
- Gent. : Mr. Sinha likes me a lot. He will secure you a job worth Rs. 500/- a month and the contracts will be signed to-morrow.
- Lady : Oh! And then?

Lady : I won't be back home tonight. Mr. Sinha has letters to dictate.

Gent : At his house, I presume—

Lady : It is noisy there. He has rented a room in the Grand Hotel. (Horn outside), Ah that's Mr. Sinha.

Gent : You mean to stay the whole night in the hotel?

Lady : Don't worry. I'm not a wax-doll.

[Exit]

Gent : Oh, how shall I manage the kids?

[Exit]

[Enter Saratchandra and Sisir Bhaduri]

Sarat : My Kironmoyee has escaped from my novel. You can see her in many homes now. But think of the bad names they called me, Bhaduri, for creating her.

Sisir : I know it Saratda.

Sarat : Well Bhaduri, any news from Theatreland?

Sisir : Circusland, you mean. There's no Theatreland today.

Sarat : And what about your plan for a National Theatre?

Sisir : That has gone down to the dark depths of my dream.

Sarat : I heard the Government offered you Padmeshree or Padma-Bhusan.....

Sisir : I refused it.

[Enter Rabindranath]

Rabindra : You cannot accept it Sisir. You are a true artist and the spirit of your art will live for ever in your creation.

Sarat : Look at our people. When a great man dies they form committees, hold programmes, raise donations. And it all ends in the installation of a statue, for birds to perch on.

[Enter Aurobindo]

Aurobindo : I am anxious for the safety of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

Rabindra : Why ?

Aurobindo : Because of Jagai and Madhai. They have multiplied to hundreds of thousands.

But I must go and call all the revolutionaries, if I am to save him.

(Advances towards the pedestal)

Rabindra : What a shame ! Where do they come from—the new Jagais and Madhais? (A great noise is heard in the background. All proceed that way. A faint ray of light appears in the Eastern sky. A little while later "Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare" is heard and along with this song is heard the sound of crackers bursting. Enter Sri Chaitanya, Jagai and Madhai following him).

Jagai : If you utter that name, we will bomb you out of existence. Now we are not two, but there are thousands of us here.

Sri Chaitanya : Still I say it is a sin. Do not do it.

Madhai : Sin?

Sri Chaitanya : You steal others food, you defy the God in man. But a day will come when you will repent this.

Jagai : Keep that for your brother Netaji, and clear out at once.

Sri Chaitanya : I have come for those who are fallen, persecuted and humiliated to-day; for whom I did appear from age to age.

[Exit Jagai and Madhai]

Sri Chaitanya : They don't listen to me, they don't. Where are you Krishna my Lord, the saviour of man. Save these ignorant mortals.

(Suddenly there is a whistle. As the note dies down, Netaji appears on horseback)

Youth of Bengal, don't sleep now, arise, awake, dispel this gloom of disorder and chaos. Our mother, our country is in distress. Our mothers and sisters are without food and clothing. Awake, Arise.

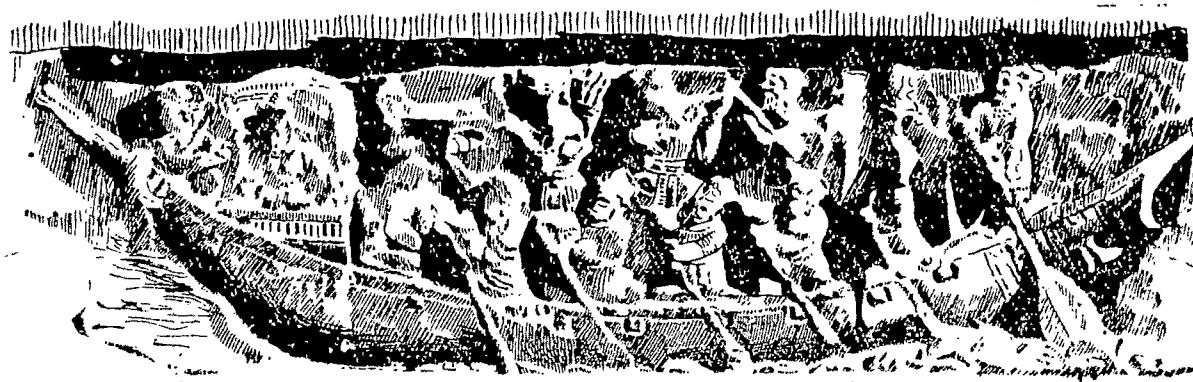
(Netaji rides off, and follows a burst of machine-gun fire and snatches of the song "Bandemataram")

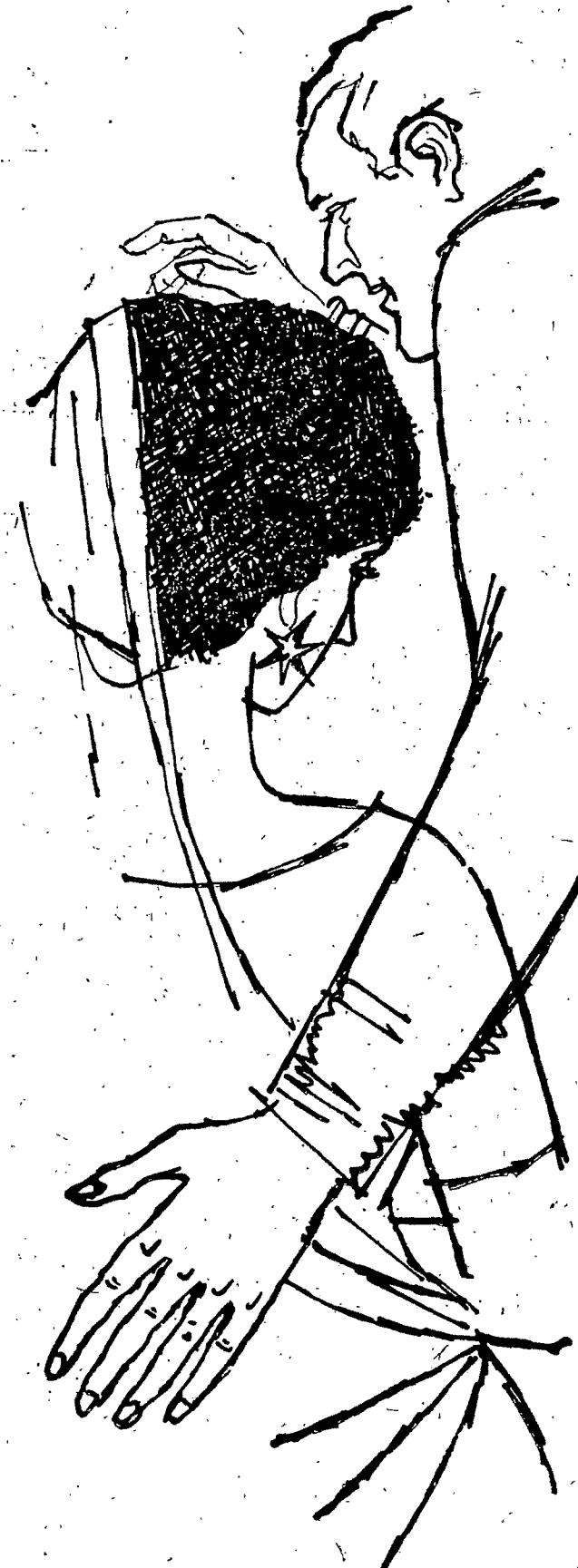
I will write it, mother, a Ramayana of this age, but it will be a new Ramayana.

(Anxiously) will you write it father ?

Yes mother, I will.....

(Valmiki reads once again the inscription on the side of the pedestal "Here once lived a race known as Bengalee.")





TIDES OF

VERNON



HE afternoon sun shone down fiercely out of a clear blue sky on the row of shoddy tenements in the Calcutta slum. The heat outside was intense—the ground parched and dry. The only reminder of the monsoon deluge of the night previous was the thick sheet of grey water which filled to capacity the drain, running the length of the street from where was now emitted a foul odour, adding to the unpleasantness and discomfort of the residents.

Kamini Das sat on her charpoy inside the room, holding the end of her sari to her nose, while fanning herself vigorously with a palm leaf fan. She sighed to herself. When was it all going to end, this poverty, this squalor—the daily wranglings at the water tap with the other women over a supply which was meagre—the nights when she retired to bed with an empty stomach because there was nothing in the kitty?

Besides—and she looked at her sixteen year old daughter—Kamala was nearly a woman now. Her time for marriage was approaching. Money would be required. The boys were also growing up. Kamini shook her head, taking in the lines of Kamala's pretty profile as the girl sat over some sewing, watching her two sons gambol and play on the rough cemented floor, where a patch of water still remained from a leak in the roof caused by the nocturnal shower.

The roof! If one could call it by such a name! It was more like a sieve topping a rectangle of pitted and stained walls, which had not seen whitewash for many a year.

Still, this was home—it included the charpoy, a broken table, a chair, a few brass utensils and the bits of unclean linen serving for bedding, and for cover during the cold months. It was all they could afford on the salary of a petty peon in a Government office—a man half of whose income went each month in paying interest on loans taken at times of acute financial stringency.

"Ma, is there anything to eat tonight?" Kamala asked, disturbing the trend of Kamini's thoughts.

"Only the atta from last week's ration," her mother replied. "I have three rupees left till your

FORTUNE

THOMAS

father draws his salary. But I hope he manages a loan today."

"I'm so hungry", Kamala muttered, passing a hand over her stomach. "Can't we have something to eat when Baba comes home?"

"We'll have tea to drink when your father returns."

Kamini flicked a fly off her foot with the end of her fan.

"Poverty is a curse!" Her daughter spoke bitterly. "The rich are very rich. The poor are extremely so. Why can't there be a society where everybody has enough?"

"That would constitute a heaven—not a society".

Kamini smiled ruefully, returning to her reflections.

But her depression increased when her husband arrived that evening. He had been unable to procure the money.

"How can we manage, Hari? There are five days till the end of the month," she grumbled.

Hari Das was not at all worried. In truth, he was bubbling over with excitement.

"Don't worry Kamini! Our troubles will be over. There will be money in plenty soon. You will want for nothing."

She looked at him oddly. He must be made to talk that way. Obviously hunger had affected his reasoning powers; because till this morning, he was in the doldrums of despair, bemoaning his lot, bitter over the raw deal which fate had handed him.

"What is wrong with you?" she asked sharply.
"Are you out of your mind?"

"No! I'm quite sane. It's just that things are going to change for us. Favourable planets are moving for our benefit."

She did not understand; she stared at him blankly.

"I met a fortune teller at lunch time this afternoon. He told me big money would flow our way. A turning point would come in our lives," Hari explained excitedly.

"Nonsense!" Kamini shifted in her seat impatiently. "Those chaps are out to make money. They predict good fortune for anybody who is willing to pay."

He shook his head.



"I did not pay. This fellow saw me near the tea shop, and came up to me on his own. The good luck was written on my face, he said. Next, he saw my palm and confirmed it. I tell you, he was genuine."

"Keep your day dreams, then. They don't affect us," she answered, going over to the table to pour some tea into a brass mug.

"But they do affect us," Hari whispered, looking at her quietly. "I have to spend something, to turn the tide of fate."

"Spend?" she turned sharply. "Where is the money to spend?"

"It is not a large sum—only two rupees for a lottery ticket."

"A lottery ticket! So that fellow was selling tickets."

"No! He only told me to buy one in the State Lottery. It is to be drawn the day after tomorrow." She flung him a challenging look.

"Where will you get the money from?"

He could not meet her gaze as he replied, "I thought I would ask you for it."

"I have but three rupees. If I give you two, I'll be left with one. How would we eat? Already, you have failed with the loan."

"I'll try another source tomorrow. I promise!" He spoke hurriedly. "Only give me two rupees first. The ticket must be bought. The fortune teller said so."

Kamini planted her hands firmly on her hips. "I won't give you a paisa. You have the dreams of a foolish man! Forget this nonsense!" She turned away angrily.

Hari persisted. He pleaded; he argued—to no avail.

She was determined. At last, he gave up and retired to the charpoy to sulk.

But the question of the lottery ticket had planted a seed of doubt in his wife's mind. It bothered her. After all, Kamini reasoned to herself what would they stand to lose? Only two rupees! They could make it up by taking a loan from somewhere!

Yet, suppose they did not get the loan? Two rupees could somehow see them through to the end of the month! No she decided firmly. She would not part with the money.

Near about bedtime, when the children had lain down for the night, the topic returned to Kamini's mind. "Hari!" she asked. "Can you really get that money tomorrow?"

He did not reply, pretending not to hear.

Kamala took up the question: "What money, Ma? Didn't Baba get a loan today?"

"No! But he may be able to tomorrow." She turned to him again. "Hari! Are you sure you'll be able to get the money tomorrow?"

"How can I be sure of anything," he answered irritably. "Life is uncertain. So is borrowing money."

"Then how can I give you two rupees for the lottery ticket in that case?"

Immediately his mood improved. His face brightened, and he looked at her expectantly.

"Yes! Yes! I'm certain I'll get the money tomorrow. Only, I must buy the ticket first."

"What ticket, Baba?" Kamala asked curiously.

"A ticket in the State Lottery," her mother explained, with a hint of excitement. "Your father met a fortune teller today. He advised him to buy a lottery ticket at once, as there is good luck in store for him."

Kamala laughed.

"I don't trust fortune tellers. They talk a lot of nonsense to make their money."

"Except that this man did not want money. He approached your father of his own accord—Don't

you see that, girl! It was the good luck shining so obviously on your father's face that did it."

"And why would a fortune teller approach me of his own free will?" Hari spoke now, detecting a trace of enthusiasm in his wife's voice. "It is obvious. It was fate that sent him. Fate has decided that the prize money is ours."

"Will it be a large sum, Baba?" Kamala asked, becoming convinced.

"It ought to be. May be the first prize—two lakhs of rupees. May be the second—about sixty thousand. Who knows? When good luck comes, only Fate decides how far it will stretch."

"That does sound wonderful! Imagine! What would we do with so much money?" she squealed in delight, working herself up to the spirit of things.

"Do! Plenty! Get out of this place first!" Hari looked around the room. "I'll build us a house—a large one—one that will not leak. There will be no smelly drains. It will be in a locality with nice people. Not the scum one gets around here."

"Yes! We'll have good furniture, too. There will be beds with coir mattresses, almirahs full of clothes, and a good looking glass for me to see my face in," Kamini added. "Life will be different."

"If I get a bellyful daily, I'll be contented," Kamala said, a far-off look in her eyes.

"You will have more than a bellyful," her father assured her. "You will have clothes and jewels. What more could you ask for?"

"Ice cream!" little Rabi, the elder of his two small sons, chipped in.

He had been listening to the conversation quietly from his bed. "Baba, can I have lots of ice-cream?"

"As much as you wish, boy." Hari patted the child's head.

"And sweets? And biscuits? And chocolates?" Robi continued, proceeding to smack his lips in anticipation.

"Plenty of sweets, and biscuits, and chocolates, I promise," Hari laughed.

"Baba, can I have a lollipop?" Bijoy, the youngest, asked sleepily.

"You're still awake!" Hari Das exclaimed. "Yes, son! Plenty of lollipops."

"Then I think we should buy that ticket," Robi decided firmly. "I'll have ice cream everyday, Sandesh, too." And he rolled over, to soon fall asleep with his dreams of goodies.

But Kamini remained awake through the long hours—even after Hari and Kamala were snoring contentedly, probably busy with dreams of grand houses and good food.

Should she part with the money? What would they do if Hari could not get the loan? What a waste it would be, if nothing came of the lottery tickets! The thoughts kept buzzing around in her brain.

Yet, again she pictured a beautiful home of their own—with good furniture, and a small garden where roses bloomed. Roses! She could never resist their fragrance. She would grow plenty of roses in the garden of her dream-home, Kamini resolved.

And that was when she finally made up her mind! She would let Hari buy the lottery ticket. If the loan failed to materialise, she could always pawn her silver bangle. She must not stop the good luck from flowing their way.

Kamini turned on her side and slowly drifted into slumber.

Outside it poured in torrents. Inside, the rain seeped through the broken tiles of the roof and flooded the room. Water also spilled down the walls, trickling onto the few items of furniture, unsuccessfully.

fully sheltered beneath sheets of newspaper. Kamini looked at the mess. There was little she could do to prevent the ruin that was taking place before her eyes. And there was nothing she could do to drive the gnawing pangs that were consuming her inside.

She had parted with the two rupees; the lottery ticket had been secured. But Hari had failed in his borrowing quest. Moreover, the silver bangle had been declared by the jeweller as a worthless bauble!

As a result, the children were hungry and complained. Though now, following the pattern of the young, the three were revelling in the pleasures of a rain bath in the street.

Kamini listened to Kamala's high-pitched giggle. In spite of her sixteen years Kamala was still such a baby, she thought.

However, the discomfort was worthwhile—in the light of the harvest to be reaped once the raffle was drawn. Kamini fastened her waist-band with a smile, making sure that the precious piece of paper was secure there.

She remembered the roses again! She could almost smell their sweet fragrance, as they bloomed in the garden of her dream home—a perfume which, suddenly, blotted out the stench of the drain, which was now at the point of overflowing onto the rain-soaked street.

*** *** ***

The moment had arrived! Good Luck was but a step away. Hari opened the newspaper with trembling fingers. The family stood about. Kamini clenched her fists nervously.

The results were on the fourth page. Hari ran his eyes down the columns of figures. Next, he was disappointed: his ticket was not included among the first three prize winners.

With failing hope he read on, then stopped, as his eyes fell on a fourth prize winning number. It was identical. There was no mistaking it. A prize of five thousand rupees was his! Fate had willed him wealth; though not in the abundance he had anticipated.

His voice was just above a whisper as he turned to his wife. "Kamini, we've won! The fourth prize is ours—five thousand rupees! Oh, God! I'm so happy."

She clutched his hand as the tears poured down her face.

"Is it true? I can hardly believe it. Our troubles are over. We have much to be grateful for, Hari."

The boys jumped for joy. Robi talked about ice cream in plenty. Bijoy demanded a lollipop. While Kamala remained silent, withdrawn, and rather shaky, as she picked up the newspaper which her father had discarded.

"Baba!" she pointed out a second later. "It is the same number all right. Only, it has the letter 'E' before it. Our ticket bears the letter 'J.'"

He walked over to stand behind her, glancing at the number again over her shoulder. It was true! The symbol was different.

A small doubt crept into Hari's mind. Did the symbol make a difference? Did it mean that the prize was not theirs? It could not be! The prize was theirs. The fortune teller had said so.

"The symbols make no difference," he explained, trying to sound confident. "It is the number that counts."

His wife hastened to agree with him; her heart fluttering of a sudden. Was good luck to be short-lived? Never! They had won the prize, truly.

"It is only a printing error," Kamini said, in a voice which trembled slightly. "Actually, the 'E' should be a 'J.'"

"True! True!" Hari seconded her. "But I can always make sure. I'll go down to the lottery office and ask them."

She brightened. "That's a good idea! We must be certain the money is ours."

It is ours! It is ours! her heart added inwardly, as she watched her husband put on his shirt and prepare to leave the house.

*** *** ***

Hari hurried down the road to the bus stop, newspaper in one hand; while with the other he felt at the pocket of his garment for the ticket counterfoil.

It was a misprint! he reached the conclusion as the crowded bus arrived and he stepped on, gaining a precarious position on the foot-board. He was jolted along, his thoughts darting to and fro: The house! It would have to be smaller. Less furniture! But plenty of food.....

"Your ticket, please."

He was roused from his reverie by the conductor's voice.

"Just a minute!" He freed a hand and inserted it into his pocket to pull out a coin, the ticket came out as well. He held onto it firmly as the bus continued on its bumpy journey.

Then, suddenly, it jerked to a stop. He was thrown off balance. The ticket slipped from his clasp and floated out of reach. He stretched to retrieve it. Too late! He was falling! Falling backward onto the slushy street!

He screamed wildly, as he saw the car approaching.

"Look out! Careful!" somebody cried.

But the wheels were already there—claiming him—enveloping him—pinning him to the sodden earth.

*** *** ***

A crowd had collected at the spot where the body lay.

"Is he dead?" a man asked curiously.

"Quite dead!" another replied.

"Fool! Jumping off a bus without looking!"

"He did not jump. I saw what happened," a third explained. "He was trying to pay the fare when he lost balance."

"Poor man!" an old lady clicked her tongue sympathetically. "Who is he?"

The bystanders shook their heads—continuing to stare curiously at the face of the dead man—noticing his half shut eyes, his half open mouth, his shattered head.....

Only, none noticed a crumpled lottery ticket, which was speeding along in the gutter—to be soon lost to sight in the rushing waters of the adjoining sewer.

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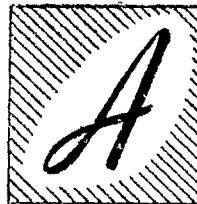
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HOW TO TELL A MAN FROM A WOMAN

SUDEV CHATTERJEE



man is absolutely indispensable. He is decisive. He rushes hell-for-leather and splashes down to save a drowning man—he desists from a hullabaloo to attract Samaritans and certainly doesn't wait for the rescue squad to arrive. He can make instantaneous decisions about bowling changes or electoral adjustments. He would lose no time in throwing up his job to grab a better one. He is like the Army General who withholds planned orders and passes improvised ones. He takes risks perhaps with an eye to gain.

But he has to consult his wife to decide which of his friends to ask for dinner, which shoes match best with his grey suit and what souvenir to give his colleague on his transfer.

A man is a rock to lean upon. He is the last one to retire having bolted all doors, and the first one to get up with scalding bed tea ready for his ailing wife as soon as she wakes. When epidemic wreaks havoc, he would much rather miss office than leave his family un inoculated. He would stand and shove everyone else out of a blazing house before moving out himself. He is like the captain of a ship and becomes a demigod in the face of danger.

A woman is a timorous creature who worries herself to near-exhaustion to learn from the morning newspaper that her husband would have to pass a procession (that bugbear) on his way to office. She lies awake all night hearing strange sounds after reading a news item that a raving lunatic has escaped from an asylum hundreds of miles away. On an ordinary night she just can't sleep when no one else is in the house. But she does not shrink in terror from a new-born baby. She is in complete command of the situation each time her one-year-old toddles towards the oven. When he cries in the

middle of the night she has gripe water and the rest ready in a matter of moments.

A man is fearless about enrolling in the army or undertaking a perilous expedition. He has astounding stamina and thinks it great fun to spend a sun-scorched summer afternoon on a football field. A woman is liable to faint at the slightest shock (trend has been steadily waning since the Victorian era) and considers it her birthright to sneer an old man out of the Ladies' Seat in a bus.

She exhibits a vastly different sense of propriety when it comes to her own person. She would readily castigate anyone if, by chance, her hair gets ruffled in an office hour bus. She professes to resent any irregularities on the silver screen and even offers to give up a lucrative career for the cause. She doesn't care a hoot whether such things are condemned by judges or not. A man, however, finds these essential under certain circumstances.

A man is supremely intelligent. Ask him and he'll tell you why Dr. Khorana was awarded the Nobel Prize, why the household thermometer must never be disinfected with boiling water and why they leave small spaces between successive rails. He can understand the principle of retrorockets or the implications of devaluation in a distant land. He would gladly explain the difference between inner and outer space or inspiration and expiration.

But he just cannot get the baby's feeding schedule into his head. He holds the baby in a way that lends it the least comfort and does not know what to do when it screams inconsolably in the next room while its mother is having her bath.

A woman is a scatterbrain who cannot follow an experiment, cannot understand astronomy, cannot make out how the fridge works. Despite all propaganda she would naively ask, "what's the use of birth control, anyway?" But she can iron her Bombay print while instructing the new maid-ser-



PRANAB MUKHERJEE

AMRITA BAZAR PATRIKA

vant, helping one child with the homework and packing the schoolbox for another. She is clever enough to know the opportune moment for airing her whims. She knows when to petition for four sarees and when for one.

A man has a wonderful memory. He can recall the five-set score of a Wimbledon final, the number of votes his man polled in the Presidential election and his longest period of waiting in months and days—for a promotion. He can faithfully recall the gist of what his employer said in a general meeting two years ago. And he certainly has a clear edge over the fairer sex in remembering history dates. But he can't tell you the size of his son's socks. He can tell you neither the kid's birthday nor the Lata Mungeshkar number that his wife refers to as "that song".

Unlike a man, a woman cannot care less about remembering irrelevant (to her) details. As a student she thinks of her studies as an inferno redolent of devilish cramming-up. But she can recall in vivid detail the courses she served as her first exercise in cookery, the olive-green dress she wore to her first party and exactly how ecstatic she felt after having her first child.

A man has inimitable manual dexterity. He can screw out rusted nuts that have remained screwed in for years. He can remove a snapped coil and recoil the electric heater. He can hold a torch in one hand while setting the fusebox right with the other. He can commute a hopelessly entangled ounce of wool into an orderly bob. Though this is her job a woman can do nothing like that. But she can balance three plates of food on cupped palms and juggle her way to the breakfast table. She can hold a moody child in one arm, stack a heap of squeezed clothes over the other—and still manage to hang them out to dry. Besides she can thread a needle—a superhuman task by male standards.

A man has sharp reflexes and keenly developed senses. He can effortlessly follow the ball mowing a hockey field with the speed of a bullet. He can aim small game at long distances and — this his wife can't do—bring them down. He can keep up with the running commentary of a test match even while his colisteners are animatedly discussing the fate of the match. But he can't talk to his friend while his youngest son is shrilly chanting nursery rhymes in the same room. When his son starts crying in the middle of a movie, he can't follow a single scene. For the sake of others anyway he stages a walkout and takes his obstreperous son along.

A woman, on the other hand, can be at a loss to care for a thoroughly pummelled and bruised child after his prestige fight with a pugilistic rival of the same age.

A man is a hard-headed realist. I believe every teenager is a sort of dreamer to start with — his sights firmly set on a never-never Utopia. Such terrifying things as college admissions and (un) Employment Exchanges disillusion him no end and by

the time he struggles to the threshold of middle age he usually tempers into a cool, calculating rationalist. He will tell bluntly you that every advertisement inviting you to save money is actually designed to make you spend more! He keeps clear of such generous statements as "we ask a bit more money of you that we may pay you back several times over". He is a first-rate student of life with the only degree that seems to help: Mr. etc., PRACTICAL.

A woman seems disconcertingly childish whenever money is involved. Her demands often outstrip the supply of money from her husband thus violating the very basis of economics. With long unpaid bills steadily piling up, reasons for premature baldness or wrinkles are not far to seek. Ask an doctor and he will tell you.

How come a modern Miss goes through as many tedious processes as her counterpart, yet remain immersed in her world of dreams. Simply because all her tedium go to provide the passport to a Missus in which event her earning capacity is usually no longer tested.

Yet, with all his natural superiority a man still plays second fiddle to his wife. Astute salesmen first seek out the ladies even if their wares have exclusive male utility. A man may be required to foot the bill, but his part in any transaction is invariably only a financial one. Note how many of those ads urging you to buy this and abandon that are directed towards women. A correspondence course in Journalism even advises point-blank, "aggressively masculine students who refuse to pander to the demands of militant femininity should seek an alternative career"! And the pathos is: a man doesn't even have a word of protest for his domineering wife (that good-for-nothing who knows not how to hold the tin-cutter).

Women have been pampered far too long giving them a wholly puffed-up conception of feminine rights. At first, for the sake of peace the mere male yielded ground to her. He has been retreating ever since and a worldwide return to the ancient matriarchal setup within the next few decades should spring little surprise.

Longfellow wrote:

As unto the bow the cord is
So unto the man is woman;
Though she bends him, she obeys him,
Though she draws him, yet she follows.
Were he among us he would without doubt give second thoughts to these words. To put the facts straight: a woman bends a man at will and draws him a bit too often. And it's indeed a question as to who obeys (or follows) whom.

Man has never allowed any monarchial tyranny to thrive for ever. Should he not rise again against the spectre of feminine despotism? His will to resist should again be the most convincing attribute by which to tell a man from a woman.

Bonani Mitra

Immortality of the Soul



THE question of the immortality of the soul is a very controversial topic among thinkers both of the East and the West. Poets, philosophers, priests and prophets have thought over this problem. It has been discussed by kings and by beggars in the street, at the same time. The interest in the theme has not died yet. It will not die, so long as human nature exists. When, some of our nearest and dearest die we ask the old question : "what becomes of the soul?" "Does it exist or not?"

The idea of survival after death has grown in significance with the growth of religion. But we cannot say, however, that belief in immortality is universal in religion.

Early culture hardly grasped the idea of the immortality of the soul. But with the advancement of culture the idea was more readily accepted. The Greeks, for instance, believed in it. But their faith in the survival of the soul exercised little influence on religion and conduct. A more practical interest in the destiny of the soul was later inculcated by Orphism and the Mysteries. But in Hebrew religion and in the religion of ancient Egypt the notion of resurrection and a life after death became more prominent. Here the ethical aspect was emphasised.

But it is in the Christian religion that the spiritual and ethical implications of the belief in immortality are most fully developed. In the Fourth Gospel, the idea of an eternal life is prominent.

Immortality or survival after death cannot be verified in experience. In Indian philosophy, belief in immortality is explained by the doctrine of Karma. In western philosophy, all the great idealist thinkers admitted immortality in some form or other. Plato afforded the first example of philosophical appreciation of the significance of the survival of the soul after death. Though there is considerable difference of opinion regarding the state of the dead, in various historical faiths, the idea of the survival is common.

According to Aristotle who was a great disciple of Plato, sensibility of the soul is perishable,

but its active intelligence is absolutely immaterial, therefore, immortal. Aristotle did not believe in personal immortality.

Berkeley, an idealist thinker, maintained that the soul is one, simple, immortal spirit. It is immortal, because it is immaterial. The body is a compound and therefore perishable. But as the soul is incorporeal, it is immortal. Berkeley, of course admitted, that God, who is the creator of the soul, can destroy it.

Hegel and neo-Hegelians argued that every finite soul has its place and function in the present-world system. It cannot completely fulfil its function in the world-system. So it must continue to exist after death and fulfil its function.

Kant, another great thinker of the West regarded immortality as essential to religion. According to him the immortality of the soul means the infinitely prolonged existence of the personality of the one and the same rational being.

But this is only one side of the problem. There is another side too. Here we find that from ancient times there have been a group of thinkers—atheists and agnostics, for example, who denied the existence of the soul after the death of the body. Objections to the idea of immortality fall under two main classes, with various sub-division.

The first comprises those, who contend that there is not sufficient evidence to assume the continuity of such a thing as a soul, after death.

The second objection is based on the supposed relation of mind to matter or thought to the physical brain. Modern physiologists, anatomists pathologists and a host of materialistic and agnostic thinkers, however, hold that body or the combination of matter produces the thought, mind or soul. They are nothing but the functions of the brain. There is no such separate thing as soul. Consequently there can be no question regarding its existence after death. The soul ceases to exist with the cessation of the brain activity.

Mr. Spencer, for example, identifies the soul with the brain and compares it to the piano. Another materialistic thinker, W. K. Clifford, does not believe in a soul as separate from the brain. But when Mr. Spencer identifies the soul with the

brain and compares it to the piano, he forgets that the piano needs a performer to strike the notes.

In Indian philosophy, the Carvakas, and the Buddhists denied the existence of the soul as separate from the gross body. To the Carvakas, soul is nothing but the conscious living body. (Caitanya visista deha eba atma). So when the body dies the so-called soul also dies. The Buddha philosophers again maintained that there is nothing real as soul or atma; what we call, soul, is really nothing more than the mental states and process. We get such a view also in the philosophy of William James in Western Philosophy. Hume, another Western thinker also believed, like some of the Buddhists, that the human soul is nothing but a bundle of impressions and ideas.

But these views are unacceptable. The self of man, we must say, is not the body, neither is it thought. It also cannot be a compound, for everything that is a compound can be seen or imagined; but the soul can neither be seen nor imagined. The soul never dies, because death means going back to the component parts and that which never was a compound, can never die. It is sheer nonsense to say, it dies. In Indian philosophy, Vedanta thinkers refuted the materialistic view that soul is nothing but the body, by pointing out that matter is only one half of the Universe and the other half is the mind or soul. It is the mind or soul, that knows the matter.

There are different arguments which attempt to justify the ground for the belief in the immortality of the soul.

1. Argument from the laws of conservation of energy:—

If we apply the law of conservation of energy to the physical as well as to the mental world, what we get is that, just as physical energy is never absolutely lost, but retained in some form or other, so mental energy also is not absolutely lost after death, but it continues in some form or other, even after death.

2. Argument on the ratiocinations of the intellect:—

The development of intellect consists in gradually transcending the limits of time and space. But, our intellect, as we see, is limited by time and space. In the present finite life, man cannot completely transcend the limitations of time and space. So we may hope that there is future life after death, where the intellect will attain its full development and completely transcend the limits of time and space.

But there metaphysical arguments, as we see, yield no positive evidence of value in favour of immortality; and these arguments put more in the conclusion, than is warranted by the premises.

3. Argument from the conservation of values:—

Mr. Hoffding enunciated the principle of conservation of values. The values, that we achieve in this life are conserved in the moral order and do

not perish. The human soul must continue to exist as the bearer of its values. So the soul is immortal.

4. Moral argument:—

But the strength for the case of immortality, as Prof. Galloway remarks, lies in the moral argument.

This line of thought was at least foreshadowed by Plato. He thought that nothing can be destroyed, except by its own inherent badness and since vice cannot destroy the soul, there is no other power, which can do so. In other words, there is an intrinsic spiritual value in the soul, which guarantees its immortal life. Mr. James Seth also puts forward the similar type of argument. The moral ideal is infinite. The ethical demand that the ideal be realised in man, postulates an infinite progress in time. This infinite progress means immortality.

Mr. Kant argues that the immortality of the soul is a postulate of morality. Morality consists in overcoming the conflict between desire and duty. This conflict cannot be completely overcome in infinite life. So there must have a future life. So the soul must be immortal.

Kant gives another moral argument in favour of the immortality of the soul. We have an ineradicable conviction that virtue must be rewarded with happiness, and vice punished with pain. But the virtuous are seldom happy in the world. So we believe that there is an after life, where there will be a perfect coincidence of virtue with happiness and of vice with pain. This is a popular argument for immortality.

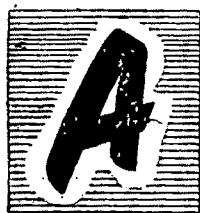
Thus we can say, that if our spiritual life has any significance, if the highest moral value is objectively valid, immortality is a fact. Immortality is a supposition, which gives greater consistency to the moral and religious experience.

The soul, therefore, is immortal. It is indestructible. It cannot be pierced by the sword, fire cannot burn it, air cannot dry it, water cannot moisten it. The soul migrates from life to life, being conditioned by the cause of such migration i.e., ignorance and by the instrument, which enables it to migrate i.e., the subtle body. In the Bhagavad-gita, Lord Krishna says, "just as a person casts off worn-out garments and puts on others that are new, even so does the embodied soul cast off worn-out bodies and take on others that are new." The soul is not born with the body, nor does it perish therewith. "As during our life-time, we survive the death of the baby-body, the young body and the mature-body successively, and retain our individuality, so after the death of the old body, we shall survive, live and retain our individuality, continue to exist through eternity." The soul thus is never born, nor does it die at any time. It is unborn, eternal, permanent and primeval. It is not slain, when the body is slain. That is why, Swami Vivekananda says to us "you are indestructible, you are the self."

The Killing of a Man Eater



AUGUSTUS SOMERVILLE



BDUL GAFFAR laid down the gun gently. From his pocket he extracted a well-oiled rag, and with this he wiped the barrels; then checking the priming and the firing mechanism, he rose and after a careful survey of his surroundings, made his way towards a dense clump of Goram trees, from which the sound of felling was coming.

As he made his way through the bushes his companions called to him affectionately for he was a great favourite among the wood-cutters but he took no notice proceeding directly towards the spot, where his young nephew, Aziz was standing. Reaching the boy's side, he put his arms round the young lad's shoulders and cautioned him once again on how he ought to behave should a tiger attack them.

"Listen Aziz. Every tiger in the Sundarbans is a Man Eater. Keep your ears and eyes open. If you wish to live to my age, always be on your guard. No matter how quick you are, the tiger is always quicker, so don't hesitate. At the faintest sound that appears strange to you, climb the nearest tree and wait there till the rest of the wood-cutters arrive or you are certain the tiger has left the vicinity, then make for the boats. Now I must leave you for I have to take up my position on the highest tree to watch the jungles for any

signs of a tiger approaching and so inform the rest of the party."

Left to himself, Aziz looked around rather fearfully. To his young and inexperienced imagination, every bush concealed a tiger and Aziz grasped his axe firmly determined to sell his life dearly. After a while he relaxed, reassured by the shouts and laughter of his companions who were felling the trees near him. Removing his shirt, he laid it on the ground near a dense clump of Golputta which grew in luxuriant clusters all along the banks of the stream that bordered the lot in which they were cutting. Then picking up his axe he started work, smiling to himself at the ribald jokes as snatches of song came to his ears. He now raised his voice joining in the songs and gradually all fear left him.

Abdul Gaffar perched himself high on a tree in the midst of the cuttings and when he heard his nephew's voice he also relaxed, realizing that the lad was now all-right and that he need have no further fear on his account.

Gradually the day wore on. The noon-day sun beat down pitilessly on the sweating backs of the wood-cutters and Aziz paused in his labours to wipe the sweat from his face and rest awhile in the shade of the neighbouring tree. Looking towards the clump of Golputta where his shirt lay he suddenly remembered that he had that very morning purchased a packet of cigarettes and with the memory came a longing for a smoke. Leaving the shade of the tree against which he was

leaning, he made his way towards his shirt. On taking this up he searched the pocket for cigarettes and matches. Lighting a cigarette he blew a cloud of smoke towards the tree on which he knew his uncle was sitting and laughed softly to himself as he detected the old man nodding on his perch. Swinging his axe he now turned towards the tree he had been felling and then stopped abruptly. Facing him snarling viciously was a huge tiger.

Aziz's terrified scream of fear awoke the old man immediately. Shouting "Bagh, Bagh" with all his might Abdul sought to warn his companions. But all his attention was concentrated on his favourite nephew.

Screaming with fear as he faced that terrible apparition Aziz, scarcely conscious of what he was doing, hurled his axe at that snarling visage and turned to flee. At that instant a massive paw descended on his head, crushing the skull like an egg-shell and the next instant he was seized and dragged away towards the forest.

From his perch on the tree the old man had seen the whole terrible drama. Swiftly he levelled his gun at the tiger and fired and at the sound of the explosion the killer roared furiously and dropping his prey, made off into the dense forest. Disregarding his own safety the old man climbed swiftly down from his perch and rushed recklessly towards the spot where the body of his nephew lay. A single glance showed him that life was extinct and he threw himself down besides the body, too shocked and too unnerved even to weep.

Here the rest of the wood-cutters found him when they returned in a body. In vain they tried to console him.

"It is Allah's will that this young lad should die today. Your shot forced the killer to abandon the body so that now we can, at least, take him back to his mother."

But all their protestations of sympathy, all their well meant advice that they should leave the place immedately lest the tiger should return, left him unmoved.

"Let me stay here" he insisted, "I will avenge his death. The fault was mine. Had I watched more carefully this would never have happened." And as he persisted in his determination, threatening to shoot any one who touched the body, the wood-cutters growing alarmed at the lateness of the hour, left the site, promising to return later, and Abdul was left alone with his dead.

For a while the old man sat perfectly still. Then as a definite resolve formed in his mind, he rose and taking up the gun from where it had fallen from his hand as he climbed down the tree, returned to the body and sat down. From a pouch attached to his waist, he extracted a generous supply of gun-powder. This he poured carefully down the barrel, ramming it home with a piece of rag. Then selecting several sizes of shot, jagged pieces of steel and an assortment of nails, he compressed the lot into a compact mass and forced this down the barrel packing it firmly over the powder. With infinite care, he cleaned the nipple of the gun and after priming it with fresh powder he fitted a percussion cap to the top and lowered the hammer so as to keep the same in place. Taking up his nephew's axe he walked a short distance away and cut a clump of Go puita throns and returning to the body he selected a site about ten feet away and forcing the stems into the soft soil he built a 'hide.' Using the rest of the fonds to enclose his body and legs, he sat down to wait the return of the tiger.

Slowly the sun set and the light died out of the Western sky. With darkness came a blaze of stars overhead and by this uncertain light,

Abdul was just able to discern the spot where his nephew lay. Not a sound disturbed the tranquility of the night and Abdul, with every sense alert to the coming of the killer, waited patiently for that fugitive movement that would warn him that the tiger had arrived.

The long hours crept on undisturbed, save for the gentle sighing of the breeze in the forest behind him. Not a movement betrayed any sign of life. From far in the distance came the wailing cry of a solitary jackal and Abdul stealing a cautious glance at the sky, realized with a pang of disappointment that the stars in the east had dimmed and dawn was almost on him.

Worn out by the nerve-racking events of the previous day and the monotony of his solitary vigil, the old man lowered his head for a moment and tired nature overcame his watchfulness and he slept. Suddenly he was awake, his heart racing and every nerve taut. The sound of crunching bone had awakened him, and as his eyes opened he saw before him the killer crouched besides the body to begin his ghastly feast.

Slowly and with infinite caution Abdul raised his old muzzle-loader, holding his breath to still the violent beating of his heart and he trained the site on that massive form, waiting for the best moment to fire. Unaware of the deadly menace behind him, the tiger tore at the succulent flesh of his victim, purring with pleasure as he crushed the young bones; then his hunger satiated for the moment he rose to go to the river to slack his thirst. This was the moment the old man was waiting for. As the killer rose to his feet, his massive chest was clearly exposed; the questing site was centred on that inviting target and Abdul pressed the trigger.

Simultaneously, with that shattering detonation the tiger roared, then fell to the ground, writhing in agony and lashing out furiously in every direction at his unseen enemy. Then Abdul, veteran of many a hunt did a very foolish thing for grasping his nephew's axe he sprang to his feet and with a shout rushed at that writhing form and buried the head of the axe in the tiger's side. The next instant he was hurled to the ground, his chest caved in by a mighty blow and the flesh torn from his ribs.

The next morning, standing at the prow of the Police launch, as it nosed its way closer into the bank, I watched the shore carefully. The wood-cutters had already arrived and on their instructions, the Serang brought the launch to a halt opposite the spot where the tragedy had occurred. I sprang ashore and with the Inspector, made our way towards where the men were standing. One glance at their faces was enough to warn me that the tiger had returned, but I was unprepared for the scene that met our gaze when we finally reached the spot, where the body of Aziz lay.

The old man was dead, his body frightfully maimed. As he lay by the side of his nephew, one arm was placed protectingly over the young boy, while in the other he still grasped the axe with which he had striven to deal the tiger its final blow. The wood-cutters stood around with bowed heads, till at a sign from the Inspector, they covered the bodies with new cloth and carried them reverently back to the Police launch.

Together with the Inspector and another armed guard, I followed the trail of the wounded tiger. Nor did we have to seek far into the forest. About fifty yards from the scene of the tragedy, we found the killer. His chest had been practically blown to shreds by the fearful impact of the overloaded charge of slugs and pieces of steel. How he had survived to come even that short distance was a mystery to all of us.

QUIET FLOWS THE JHELUM

A. K. M. HASAN



S the Caravelle turns sharply between mountain ranges to touch the runway, Srinagar (5200 ft.) looks like a barren plateau in the heart of Kashmir Valley. It is deceptive. As one motors down from the airport to the city through groves of poplars and willows, pear and apple trees along the Jhelum, the veil is slowly lifted.

"It is so like England!" a homesick English Girl sitting by my side whispered to me. Working with the British Army in Singapore, she is not rich enough to go home for her vacation but extended her purse to make a last trip to India before "I am packed in a C-114 for home in 1971 as part of the British withdrawal from the east of the Suez."

By the time you settle down in a houseboat at Zero Bridge on the Jhelum to a cup of jasmine tea and to lilting folksongs put out by the Srinagar Station of the AIR, you have already arrived. Whether it is a tune resembling Bhatiali on the Padma or one in a film from Bombay, it is immediate. The houseboat provides the cheapest accommodation in Srinagar—different classes catering to different tastes according to the size of the purse. I would any day prefer a boat on the quiet flowing Jhelum to one on the stagnant Dal Lake which does not have as good a smell as is expected. Off-season rates are negotiable. If you are bored at any time, take a trip to Gulmarg or Pahalgam to see the difference.

A white-cheeked bulbul searching for her mate in the apple tree in the compound of the Circuit House on the Jhelum woke me up the next morning before tea arrived. The Circuit House like the State Guest Houses adjoining it are managed by the Department of Tawaza (hospitality) of the Government of Jammu and Kashmir. To have a better view of the bulbuls, I threw open the wire-net window at the risk of letting in mosquitoes. They visited the Circuit House several times a day. Common mynahs were the other regular visitors to the house.

Besides the Dal Lake about which I shall tell you later, the Mughal Gardens—Chasma Shahi (Royal Spring), Shalimar (Abode of Love) and Nishat (Garden of Pleasure)—are the chief attractions of Srinagar. Each is worth a day. Spring waters flowing through these gardens have produced

a riot of colour. You can study flowers, picnic, laze or just watch the visitors or do anything up to 7 P.M. when the gardens close for the night. While returning in a shikara (water-taxi) from Chasma Shahi after dusk with a friend, I had the best view of Srinagar with its ring of hills and strings of lights reflected in the dancing waters of the Dal Lake. A mild breeze added to our joy although it put the poor shikarawala to extra labour against the headwind. The prescribed rate for the 12-mile return boat journey is six rupees only.

A few miles from the City limits, emerald green paddy sways as the breeze plays on it in waves. As we snaked up along the Jhelum towards Anantnag, paddy fields covered miles and miles on either side of the road. The river fringed by willows and poplars provides water for irrigation as well as domestic use. Girls in their "farans" wash their utensils or fill their pitchers as part of their daily domestic chores or help their menfolk break the clods with hoes in the upland fields. The Hanjis (equivalent of manjis or boatmen of Northern India) glide downstream in their boats carrying merchandise to Srinagar or struggle upstream pulling and pushing along the poplar banks.

At Achabal, a trout culture centre is the prime attraction. I was told that trout was introduced here from Europe. Rainbow trouts could be seen in the hatcheries swimming leisurely in the flowing spring waters. In one of the hatcheries, we could not see any trout although the signboard pronounced them as three-year-olds. When I expressed disappointment to the guide, he took a handful of feed from his pocket and threw them into the muddy water. Over two dozen three-year-olds jumped up to snap them in a second. The garden at Achabal is large and beautiful. If you bring a permit from Srinagar, you can do trout fishing in the stream below Achabal.

The pine forest at Kokarnag (about 7,000 ft.) is an excellent tourist attraction with camping sites at the base by the side of a swift running rivulet. In August, the water of the stream here was colder than fridge-cooled water. Trout fishing is also allowed here on permit. A pair of sandpipers, our winter visitors, which had gone there for nesting, were very much vexed while walking along an irrigation channel at the foot of the pine forest. I came close to their nest. Piping "tee-tee-tee-wheeeit, " "wheeit", they tried to lure me away from their nest stopping barely at arm's length, pretending to be injured. I had no time to watch them

for long and absolutely no intention to break-up their happy home.

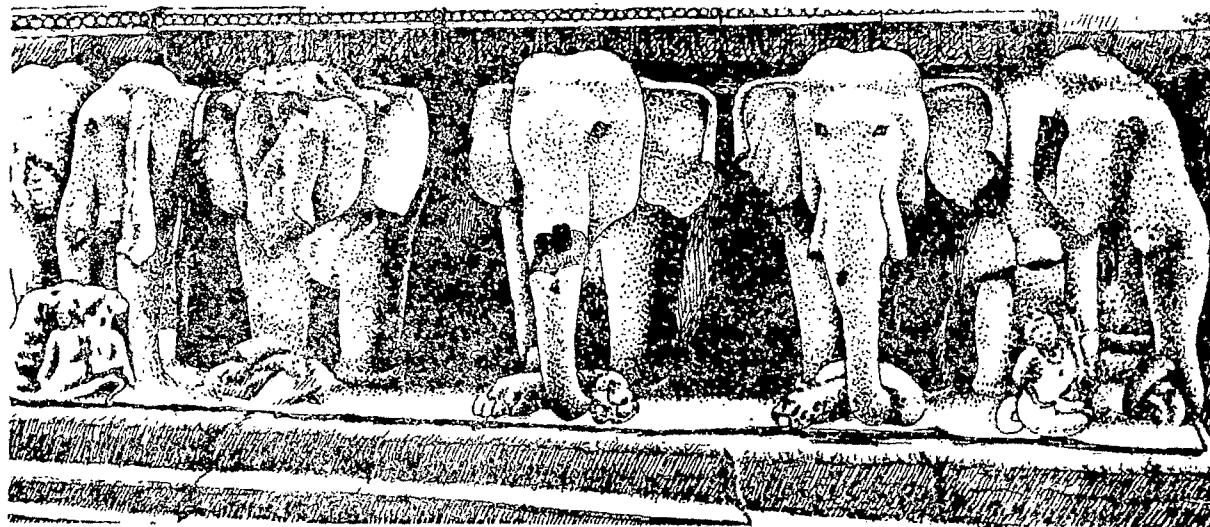
As we climbed towards Pahalgam, which appeared to me to be much better than Srinagar in scenic beauty, along the Lidder Valley, I was struck by the easy irrigation these swift flowing rivers provide. To bring water home, no Bhagirath is needed; nor even an engineer. According to the volume of water needed a spur of boulders is required to be constructed on the bed of the river along the flow to train the water to flow in the direction wanted. Within a distance of 100 yards downstream, river water may be irrigating a plot of land 20 ft. above the bed of the river without the use of diesel-oil or electricity. Not far from Pahalgam, a villager has thus brought water to his hut on an islet in the middle of the Lidder river. At Pahalgam the water of the river is a greyish white, a shade of our toned milk from Haringhata. It also tastes equally good.

Amarnath is 30 miles from Pahalgam. Chandanwari is only 10 miles from Pahalgam and was covered with snow even in August providing sledge rides. It lies on the route to Amarnath. Fishing and pony riding are the chief sports of Pahalgam. I saw a brave few swimming in the Lidder and catching the nearest boulder just before the rapids occur. I had the worst pony ride to the go't course there, about 2 miles up the hill, through a pine forest since my mule ride into Tibet across the Nathu La in 1950. Pahalgam has also the best camping sites in Kashmir Valley, but I doubt how long one would be able to stand the roar of the foaming waters.

Surf-riding and water skiing were my favourite sports in the Dal Lake. Surf-riding is comparatively easy, once you learn not to pull on the line and also cheaper. A motorboat pulls the riding board and costs Rs. 1.50 per round. Skiing is not only more difficult but also costs Rs. 2.00 per round and Re. 1 per fall. The basic principle in water-skiing is that you should not tug at the tie-line but let the line pull you up to standing position gradually. In order to keep the balance, a beginner may bend the knees while skiing after take-off. The essential point is that one must be a good swimmer.

Most of the tourists joining aquatic sports were Europeans. But a few local boys did quite well in water-skiing on one leg weaving patterns on the lake. While I was lazing in water between surfing and skiing, a 10-year European boy drifted to me and asked, "Are you alone?" I had watched his father teaching him skiing and had assumed that the lady with his father was his mother and the 14-year-old boy, the 7-year-old girl and the 4-year-old girl in the group his brother and sisters. "Yes," I replied, adding: "I am not lucky like your father."

The boy blushed and said that the lady was not his mother. His mother had divorced his father and married another gentleman in Europe. The older girl was his kid sister and the boy and the younger girl were the children of the lady whose husband was working in a city in India. He had flown in from Europe with his sister for a holiday with their father and would go back to school soon. I then realised his need for a little warmth of the heart to compensate for atleast part of his loss.



Pulakesh De Sarkar

writes on

That Partition and This



T is a bewildering paradox and seemingly defies any reasonable explanation. Nonetheless, it is there in the history of Bengal and so, in that of India.

HOW is it that a mere administrative partition of a province, with geographical integrity and sovereignty of India

fully retained, threw Bengal into convulsions that did not subside till the "settled" fact was unsettled (1905-11), and that Bengalees acquiesced in dismemberment of not only the province but of the country (British India as such) as well to facilitate formation of a separate independent foreign State in 1947? And even though it implied snapping, for all time to come, the chord—ethnological, linguistic and cultural—that bound them together?

NO, it is not the communal question that made the difference, if the report of the Sedition Committee is to be accepted. It said: "The agitation was Hindu and drew its strength from the bhadralok. It was keenly resented by the Muhammadans, who form the majority of the inhabitants of Eastern Bengal; and thus throughout the year 1906-7, Hindu and Muhammadan relations became exceedingly strained in that province. The boycott and the consequent picketing of shops by students and school-boys led inevitably to frequent disturbances. In both Bengals it was frequently asserted and sometimes believed that the Government was setting the Muhammadans against the Hindus. Educated Hindu feeling reached a remarkable intensity of bitterness." (p. 19).

SO, it happened in spite of the active opposition of the "Muhammadans who formed the majority of the inhabitants of Eastern Bengal." It should also be borne in mind that Bengal in 1905 till October when partition was carried out consisted of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. And it is on record that the Anti-Partition or Annulment Movement did not very much stir up Bihar and Orissa. It was confined to Bengal, strictly and nakedly speaking, to its Eastern part which was proposed to be and ultimately sliced off.

NECESSARILY, therefore, one is led to the question of leadership in the two crucial phases and the factors that contributed to the momentum of the 1905 Movement and the subsidence of 1947.

WITHOUT apology, I aver that it was the Permanent Settlement or physically, the Zemindars and the products of the said system, mainly or primarily, provided the leadership to the Anti-

Partition Movement (though the partition was basically administrative).

BY 1947, again, the entire complex and content changed. The production relation also had undergone metamorphosis. The Permanent Settlement Leadership had to be traced to the other end of the curvature, a dying sun in the last lap of the horizon. It had been replaced by a new character of leadership which had a pull beyond the borders of the province (Bengal minus Bihar minus Orissa) and had not the same or similar STAKE in Bengal generally and in Eastern Bengal particularly.

WHEREAS the Anti-Partition Movement in 1905 had its main base in East Bengal, the pro-partition movement in 1947 had its main base in West Bengal.

OF course, Calcutta was the centre of both.

TWO

THE Sedition Committee, composed of Mr. Justice Rowlatt, Judge of the King's Bench Division of His Majesty's High Court of Justice, Sir Basil Scott, Chief Justice of Bombay, Diwan Bahadur C. V. Kumaraswami Sastri, Judge of the High Court of Madras, Sir Verney Lovett, Member of the Board of Revenue, United Provinces, Mr. P. C. Mitter, Additional Member of the Bengal Legislative Council and Mr. J. D. V. Hodge, ICS., Bengal, reported in 1918 thus about the partition of Bengal: "The provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, with their seventy-eight million people and their great capital city, were then a single charge under a Lieutenant-Governor. Lord Curzon and his advisers felt that times had altered since this charge was constituted. Population had greatly increased; business and trade had extended; administration had become more complex; the educated classes had grown in numbers and had taken to politics. On the other hand, the Government had weakened. The province was undermanned; the British and Indian staff was overworked; administrative departments were starved; and communications were neglected. Especially were those defects prominent in the eastern districts, the physical features of which are peculiar.

"A project for dividing the provinces into two charges was vehemently discussed during the last two years of Lord Curzon's Vice-Royalty. The Government of India held that some such arrangement was imperative, but the Calcutta political leaders were strongly opposed to any division of Bengal proper. When the Government pressed this division in the cause of administrative efficiency and

convenience, Hindu politicians and newspapers preached far and wide that Bengali interests would seriously suffer and Bengali nationality would be divided. Lord Curzon visited the eastern districts. After much consideration he decided that there was no substance in this objection, and that the contemplated division must be made. The partition was announced in July 1905 and was carried out in the following October, when the two new provinces of Western Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and Eastern Bengal and Assam started on their short-lived career." (p. 18).

OBVIOUSLY, it reflected the official version of the partition-motif. The Sedition Committee, a creature of the extant ruling class, could not but do so. But the report provides certain salient facts which are pertinent to the understanding of the matter in its proper perspective. They are: (a) Bengal was Bengal plus Bihar plus Orissa; (b) its population was 78 millions; (c) it was under a Lieutenant Governor; (d) admittedly, the Government had weakened; (e) educated classes had grown in numbers and had taken to politics; (f) project vehemently discussed and Calcutta political leaders were strongly opposed to division of Bengal proper; (g) Hindu politicians and newspapers preached far and wide; (h) the question of Bengali nationality was raised; (i) Lord Curzon defied or dismissed public opinion and partition was carried out in the teeth of opposition in October 1905; (j) the partition of Bengal had a short-lived career.

BUT Lord Curzon or the Sedition Committee did not care to reply to the question as to why a part of Bengal proper or Bengali-speaking area was chosen to be partitioned, when the British ruling class, in their wisdom, could easily take out Bihar and Orissa or either if unburdening of the "undermanned", "understaffed" and "overworked" charge was the motive. By their perverted logic they only sought to establish the justifiability of tagging a part of the Bengali-speaking area—a part that had the predominance of "Muhammadans", as the Committee called them, to Assam and non-regulated areas in order to weaken the increasing number of educated classes who were taking to politics. They did not fight shy, therefore, of lending the new province, thus created, a communal colour, by pandering to the Muslim backwardness. More so, because, the creatures of Permanent Settlement or the Zemindars were predominantly Hindus and most of their landed properties were in East Bengal, cultivated by a majority of Muslim peasants. Though not totally "absentee" till then, they were the main props of the Calcutta leadership.

SO, the STAKE of which I mentioned earlier was here. They were Calcutta leaders, because, they were the cream of the society or the living patrons of Bengali culture but their material stake was in East Bengal. And this is why the storm lashed more fiercely in East Bengal than in West. Except Calcutta there was hardly any public protest meeting in the muffassil areas of West Bengal. A Burdwan note, dated January 18, 1904, told that one Babu Uma Charan Bannerjee, M.A., Principal of the Burdwan Raj College, "who is a native of Vikrampur in Dacca", was to convene a public meeting "with the full sympathy of the leading gentlemen" to protest against the partition of Bengal, but this was later abandoned. This is not to show that West Bengal had little or no sympathy with the Anti-Partition Movement, but, on the contrary, to lay on the character of the movement per se. West Bengal could not afford to be indifferent to the movement that was surging, atleast for the compactness or the indivisibility of the 1905 leadership. Every meeting that was held in the remote muffassil

areas of East Bengal was invariably presided over by a Zemindar. Many of them, though had a second habitat in the "great city" of Calcutta, also spent a part of the year in their Zemindary, maintaining, thereby direct contact with their tenants. So, the meeting which he or they presided over or addressed could not but be attended by his or their people, irrespective of community. In 1905, at many of the anti-partition meetings Muslim Zemindars participated, took the chair or addressed the mixed gatherings, till the ruling class deliberately launched upon Hindu-baiting and succeeded in alienating and rallying round them communal-minded "Muhammadans" under the aegis of the Nawab of Dacca. But, in spite of them, the vitality of the 1905 leadership was strong enough to confront and outwit the British.

THREE

ATLEAST twenty-two months before partition was carried out meetings were held in the interior of Mymensingh, Dacca, Chittagong, Comilla, Chandpur, Jalpaiguri, Madaripur, Noakhali, Barisal, Bogra, Pabna, Faridpur, Manickgunge and so on so forth, presided over by persons like Pramatha Nath Roy Chowdhury, "the poet Zemindar of Santosh", Hem Chandra Chaudhuri, Zemindar, Tarak Chandra Sen, Zemindar, Mohammed Joynal Abedin Mia, Chowdhuri Anwarali Khan, Zemindar, Kali Chandra Sinha Roy, Zemindar and a host of them.

NEEDLESS to say, these are but illustrative and never exhaustive; the above have been picked up from reports as published in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* between January 1 and January 19, 1904. Even, according to the Sedition Committee Report, the issue was "vehemently discussed during the last two years of Lord Curzon's Vice-royalty". It was a sustained, and unflagging agitation till partition was annulled—from the latter half of 1903 to 1911—without truce and without surrender. Surrender—Not was the name of Surendra Nath (Banerjee). The old files of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* abound in such news-coverage. Group meetings, public meetings, conferences, deputations, submission of memoranda; the sending of memorials were the order of the long period.

A deputation consisting of the leading Zemindars of Muktagacha, Sherpur, Gouripur, Kalipur and Ramgopalpur, Secretaries of Bar Association, Anjuman Islamia and Mymensingh Association, the Chairman of the Municipality, Vice-Chairman of the District Board waited on the District Magistrate (January 11) to request him "to represent to the Government the undesirability of the transfer of the District to the backward administration of Assam." The correspondent of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* sent also a copy of the memorial prepared on the occasion and submitted to His Honour, Sir Andrew H. L. Fraser KCSI, Lieutenant Governor of Bengal. And in this connection, the correspondent gave the following interesting news: "The President-elect of the General Meeting to be held on the 17th instant the Maharaja Bahadur of Mymensingh, is expected to reach here from Calcutta on the morning of the 16th instant and grand preparations are being made by the Reception Committee to give him a fitting reception at the Railway Station."

A news item from Barisal, dated January 13, said: "This evening a crowded public meeting of all classes of people was held in the spacious hall of the Brojo Mohun Institution. Zemindars of respectable families attended the meeting. D. N. Dutt Bahadur occupied the chair. Babus Aswini Kumar Dutt and Nebaran Chunder Das made stirring speeches." It said that a Committee for presenting a memorial to His Honour the Lt. Governor of

Bengal was formed with the following : Rai Dwarakanath Datta Bahadur, Babus Rajani Kanta Das Gupta, Haro Nath Ghosh, B.L. Kali Prasanna Guha B. L., Maulavi A. K. Fozial (Fazlul ?) Huq M.A., B.L., Babu Behari Lal Roy Chowdhury, Zemindar, Babus Upendra Nath Sen, Zemindar, Nibaran Ch. Das Gupta, M.A.B.L., Aswini Kumar Dutta, M.A.B.L., Tarini Kumar Gupta LMS., Moulavi Hemaituddin Ahmed B.L., and so others. A copy of the memorial also was sent and published in the Patrika.

THEN came one of the momentous conferences at the British Indian Association Room where Maharaja Sir Jotindra Mohan Tagore presided. Maharaj Kumar Prodyot Coomar Tagore, Honorary Secretary, read letters of sympathy from amongst others, the Raja of Cossimbazar, Rai Shub Churn Banerjee, Secy. of the East Bengal Landholders' Association and the Secy. of the Mymensingh Association. Sitanath Roy moved and Surendranath Banerjee seconded the following resolution: Resolved that a public meeting be convened at the Town Hall on Friday, the 12th of February, 1904. A provisional Committee with the following was formed : Maharaja of Durbhanga, Maharaja Sir Jotindra Mohan Tagore, Maharaja Surya Kanta Acharyya Choudhury, Maharaja Jagadindra Nath Roy, Maharaja Monindra Chundra Nundi, Maharaja Girija Nath Roy, Raja Pramotho Nath of Naldanga, Raja A. N. Roy of Cossimbazar, Raja Peary Mohan Mukherjee, Raja Promotho Nath Roy, Nawab Said Amir Hossain Khan Bahadur, the Hon'ble Moulavi Sery-ul-Islam, Khan Bahadur, Moulavi Shamsul-Huda, Lal Mohan Ghose and others.

The above leaves little room for doubt as to who the leaders of the Anti-Partition Movement were and what was the character of the leadership. Apropos, this may also be remembered that this was in 1904 when the proposal was just mooted and was in circulation—in January 1904, atleast, 22 months before partition was carried out and 19 months before the partition was announced.

FOUR

THE Sedition Committee mentioned the role of newspapers also. It must be said that long before the partition was announced and carried out, protest against the mere proposal at a tentative stage, was extensively and faithfully voiced in the columns of the Nationalist Press and the Patrika's position was unique amongst them. The name of Motilal Ghose deserves special mention.

As early as January 2, 1904, in its editorial article, captioned "The Partition Of Bengal" the Patrika exposed the skeleton in the cupboard, the real motif of the partition proposal. It said :

"We all perhaps know why Assam was separated from Bengal. It was done on the plea that one pair of shoulders could not carry the three provinces of Bengal, Behar and Orissa together with Assam, but really for the benefit of the Civil Service. For creation of a Chief Commissionership means several fat berths for the civilians. It, however, gradually came to be discovered that poor and jungly province of Assam was 'top-heavy' with the separate Government placed on its head — it could not pay its own way. And thus the Chief Commissionership of Assam was in danger of being abolished and with a whole lot of civil service appointment. It was thought that the addition of Sylhet and Cachar, would remove the difficulty; but the Assam administration is now a most as poor as it was before. The two districts named above, were violently cut from Bengal and joined with Assam in spite of the opposition of their inhabitants.

"It was in 1896 that the question of taking away another limb of Bengal and engrafting on

Assam was mooted. Sir Charles had to realize the helpless condition of the Assam administration and as soon as he took the reins of Government of Bengal in his hands, he proposed that the best way to put Assam administration into a solvent condition was to make over the Chittagong to Assam. Such an arrangement, in his opinion, would serve two purposes. It would lighten the work of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, and, at the same time, put more money into the coffers of the Assam administration.

"Sir Charles Elliot, however, left Bengal before his proposal could be carried into effect. Sir Alexander Mackenzie, his successor, however, was indifferent as regards this matter; while the people of Chittagong raised a howl of opposition which the authorities could not ignore.....

"Seven years have since passed and the same question has again cropped up in a more aggravated form than before; for it was the Chittagong Division only that was wanted in 1896, and now Dacca and Mymensingh also are demanded."

ON January 7, 1904, the Patrika wrote the following, inter alia, in an editorial paragraph : "We wish we could publish all the private letters we are receiving in this connection from all parts of Eastern Bengal. They would have shown at once the agonising state of the mind in which tens of thousands of people have been thrown by this proposal of separating them from their brethren in the West and casting at the mercy of an inferior administration." The same paragraph also contained the following which would show as to whom the newspapers of the time pointed out to the authorities as the spokesmen of the people. "His Honour may know the real truth, if he has yet any doubt about the genuineness of the movement, by conferring with such foremost men of Eastern Bengal as Mr. Justice Ghose, Maharaja Bahadur Suryakanta Acharya, Babu Ananda Chandra Roy, Babu Anath Nath Roy and few others."

The PATRIKA wrote innumerable articles all these years, almost daily, all the year round, subjecting the proposal to a close analysis from all conceivable angles and laid it bare and completely exposed official contention. Placing parallel cases and quotation of one Mr. Risley's letter to the Bengal Government which suggested, formation of territorial redistribution should be sought not in the question of race but in that of language.

"The province of Bengal is inhabited by Ooryas Bengalees and Beharees. It is only language that divides and unites the people of this province. If the man of Midnapore is a Bengali, so is the man of Chittagong, though they are hundreds of miles away and divided by many big rivers. The man of Sambalpur is, however, an Oorya, though he is so close to Midnapur, because he speaks Oorya and not Bengali. If the Government has any desire to divide Bengal into two or three parts on the basis of administrative convenience, even then the best thing for it would give the Ooryas, the Bengalees and the Beharees each a separate administration.

"But the Government is going to seek administrative convenience by a queer method. It will keep the Bengalees, the Ooryas and the Beharees together, though they speak different languages. But it will take eleven million Bengali speaking people from Bengal and thrust them upon the Assamese in Assam who do not speak Bengalee, but a different tongue." (Jan. 8, 1904).

FIVE

THERE were other factors, too which contributed to the escalation of the movement. Possibly, they cannot be better described than what did the Sedition Committee:

"The bhadralok of Bengal have been for centu-

ries peaceful and unwarlike, but, through the influence of the great city of Calcutta were early in appreciating the advantages of Western learning. They are mainly Hindus and their leading castes are Brahmins, Kayasthas and Vaidyas; but with the spread of English education some other castes too have adopted bhadralok ideals and modes of life. Bhadralok abound in villages as well as in towns, and are thus more interwoven with the landed classes than are the English-literate Indians of other provinces. Wherever they live or settle, they earnestly desire and often provide English education for their sons. The consequence is that a number of Anglo-Vernacular schools, largely maintained by private enterprise, having sprung throughout the towns and villages of Bengal. No other province of India possesses a network of rural schools in which English is taught. These schools are due to the enterprise of the Bhadralok and to the fact that, as British rule gradually spread from Bengal over Northern India, the scope of employment for English-educated Bengalis spread with it. Originally they predominated in all offices and higher grade schools throughout Upper India. When, however, similar classes in other provinces also acquired a working knowledge of English, the field for Bengali enterprise gradually shrank. and as the education which they receive is generally literary, and ill-adapted to incline the youthful mind to industrial, commercial or agricultural pursuits, they have not succeeded in finding fresh outlets for energies. Their hold on land too has weakened owing to increasing pressure of population and excessive sub-infeudation. On the other hand, the memories and associations of their earlier prosperity, combined with growing contact with Western ideas and standards of comfort, have raised their expectations of the pecuniary remuneration which should reward a laborious and, to their minds, a costly, education. Bhadraloks have always been prominent among the supporters of Indian political movements, and their leaders have watched with careful attention events in the world outside India. (It was to them) that Barindra appealed. When he renewed his efforts in 1904, the thoughts of many members of this class had been stirred by various powerful influences." (pp. 15-16).

WITH the fusion of underground revolutionary movement for dislodging the ruling British satraps by force the entire Anti-Partition Movement underwent a qualitative change. Bomb cult swayed young Bengal for a period. Boycott and Swadeshi also proved to be equally effective weapons. But the Sedition Committee italicised the ascetic influence of Swami Vivekananda which undoubtedly contributed to the psychosis of the youths of the period.

FORTY-TWO years later nothing of the 1905 conditions remained. The entire context changed. With the objective condition metamorphosed by 1947, the leadership also changed. Gone with the wind was the Permanent Settlement to all intents and purposes, awaiting a burial (a few years later).

Gone with it too was the firm grip of the 1905-leadership. Bengal revolutionaries who believed in armed struggle were by then routed not only from the Congress alone but were hunted out from all-corners of the country. The year 1934 wrote an epitaph on them on the Lebong Race Course. The British Government, Congress and Communists (a new element in the political arena) combined to condemn and mock at them as anarchists, terrorists or bandits. These three succeeded in combing out and eliminating these "violent" people.

BENGAL in 1947 was only one of the units in the British Indian map, Congress and the Muslim League maps. Bengal had no exclusive issue, it was an all-India issue. Necessarily, this was reflected in the local leadership as well. It was not a hundred per cent Bengal-leadership as it was in 1905. In 1947 it had conflicting pulls from both inside and outside. The main challenge came from the "Muhammadans" who, by 1947, were well organised in contrast, conscious of their individuality, and, thanks to the machinations of communal politicians poised for a violent fight with the major community. They were in numerical superiority, it was said, and by that sheer weight swerved to an extreme point, claiming an independent State of their own—Pakistan, not on linguistic but on communal-cum-territorial basis. Though Bengali-speaking, they said, they are a nation distinct from the Hindu nation, they needed their homeland. Bengal Muslims were linked up with their all-India body—Muslim League. The Congress which the M.L. dubbed as Hindu also was an all-India body and so Bengal Congress was linked up with that supreme body. The Communist Party of India was, again, an all-India, nay, an international body. So, even broadly speaking, Bengal had no single leadership; it was split up atleast in three. With the result that whatever was decided at the top was binding on the provincial unit. When the CPI (of 1947) supported the claim of the M.L. and ultimately the Congress succumbed to the partition proposal, there was no such thing as a Bengal leadership. When all the three mighty agreed to the partition what else the people could do? There existed no alternative leadership which could guide them otherwise. In fact, Bengal in 1947 was bereft of leadership. The Provincial unit of the M.L. stood by the all-India M.L.; the Bengal Congress or Bengalee-Congressies could not but fall in line with the all-India decision; so was the case with the "local" Communists.

The PERMANENT Settlement economy was gone too. The production relation of 1905 was gone and owing to the failure of the landlords to step into the new production relation, elements from outside from the province filled up the vacuum. Bengal lost leadership in economy, as well. Bengal had, therefore, no initiative of its own. She had no hand in shaping all-India politics or decision. Since 1947 Bengal has had but to agree to whatever had been decided for him at the all-India level.

And Lord Curzon is vindicated!

FESTIVALS

Young Folk's Corner



Festivals are religious celebrations that express man's joys, fears and feeling of gratitude. As civilization developed, festivals became more and more elaborate and included many non-religious elements. The ancient Greeks honoured their Gods with festivals that often included athletic games. The most important were the Olympian games. To the Romans, every great occasion was a festival. And the games in the arena were an essential part. Later of course, they degenerated and thousands were sacrificed to the whim of the Emperor and the rabble.

The early Britons had their festivals in the weird ceremony of the Druids. But these were only religious and serious affairs. In the East, the pagan countries have a host of festivals to their strange Gods. But in these years of progress, and advanced thinking, most of them have lost a great deal of their religious significance and have merely become days of holiday and pleasure than anything else.

With the advent of the Christian era, festivals attained their true, perspective value. They have a definite religious flavour. But they are also days of merry-making and rejoicing. The main festivals of the Christian are, as we all know, Christmas and Easter. The New Year is celebrated, not as a festival, but as a means of putting aside all the mistakes and unhappiness of the past year, and the making of resolutions to make the New Year really good and happy, and so, New Year's Day is a great day for all.

The Christian festival which spreads goodwill among people is celebrated throughout the world—even in non-Christian countries. Christmas Day is a great day for all and it would seem that Jesus, whose birth it commemorates, has indeed blessed it. Even wars stop on Christmas Day by mutual arrangement to enable the combatants to enjoy at least one day of peace and happiness.

The Chinese celebrate their New Year in mid-winter, with religious ceremonies, parades, fire-crackers and great merry-making. The Japanese have their festivals of flowers. Jewish festivals honour both religious and national events. Among the most important is the Passover. The Moslems observe theirs. The Hindus have the Durga Puja and others of course, but Durga Puja is the greatest for which offices and schools are closed all over the country for several days.

So festivals from the earliest times have been part and parcel of man's existence. They enable him to give expression to his religious fervour from time to time, to have a holiday from the daily grind and to enjoy himself. The world would be a dull place indeed, without all these colourful celebrations of religion.

SHAHEEN AKHTAR

The Magic of Puppetry

SAILA CHAKRAVORTTY

Puppets are nothing but dressed-up dolls moved and operated either by hands or by strings or sticks. These three techniques are used by puppeteers all over the world.

The word puppet comes from Latin word 'pupa', meaning a doll or a girl. In Bengali we call it 'putul' and in Hindi it is known as 'putli' and the puppeteer is called 'putli-wallah'.

There are endless varieties of puppets and the materials from which they are made. Wood was the favourite material of the puppeteers not only in our country but also in Europe. A piece of light wood is carved into the form of a human or animal head as you have seen in Rajasthani puppets. In Bengal we had bigger sizes of rod-puppets made of wood and richly decorated. At present, wood is scarcely used, its place has been taken by paper-pulp sponge, plastic, rubber-foam, cloth and so on.

The material used must be given a desired shape. It must have an interesting look. The expression can be grave, awful or funny as you like, suitable for the characters they represent, but they must be catchy and attractive.

How did the clown move like that, playing with the balloon? It is a doll, isn't it? a girl asked me after a puppet show. Did you like it? I asked. Oh, immensely! said she.

The puppets can create a mysterious effect. The spectators are entertained and in a queer way they feel like looking through a magic key-hole into a world of fantasy.

Now, I will try to give you some hints how to make this interesting magic of entertainment. Those of you who find pleasure in the craft of the hand, may try it at their leisure time.

Let me tell you of glove-puppets only, the easiest one to make and to operate. You are to choose a character, be it a girl, a boy, a clown or a serious looking person. Make a drawing of it on paper. Then take a lump of plasticine, mould it to the required shape of head in the same way you do clay-modelling. Next have some gloy or flour-paste and some torn pieces of newspaper. Paste the paper pieces with gloy on the surface of the plasticine head, paste several layers of them. Leave it in sun to dry. Now cut the whole into two halves, take out the plasticine from inside the halves and you get two pieces of paper-shells. Place them in position and join them. You get the head, rub it with sand paper and apply paint on it. Draw eyes and lips. Glue hair on the head.

Then you make two hands with rolled paper pipes, fix palms and fingers. Fix the hands and head in a thick cloth jacket as shown in the picture. Make some costume for this tiny body and now your puppet is ready.



You are to use three of your fingers to operate it. The first finger to hold the head, the thumb and middle finger for two hands. As you move your fingers the puppet will make interesting gestures and you will be amused to see it.

If you move these puppets over a screen high enough to cover your body, people will see the puppets only and not you. Now, you can make a drama in which these dolls will play and you will be amused to hear the spectators' laughter and ejaculations.

You will, I am sure, like to go into more details and improve upon this elementary process. I told you and the more you go, the more you will be rewarded with satisfaction.

You have imagination and creative urge, there is no reason why you will not invent a new field of expressing yourself.

SCIENCE IS FUN



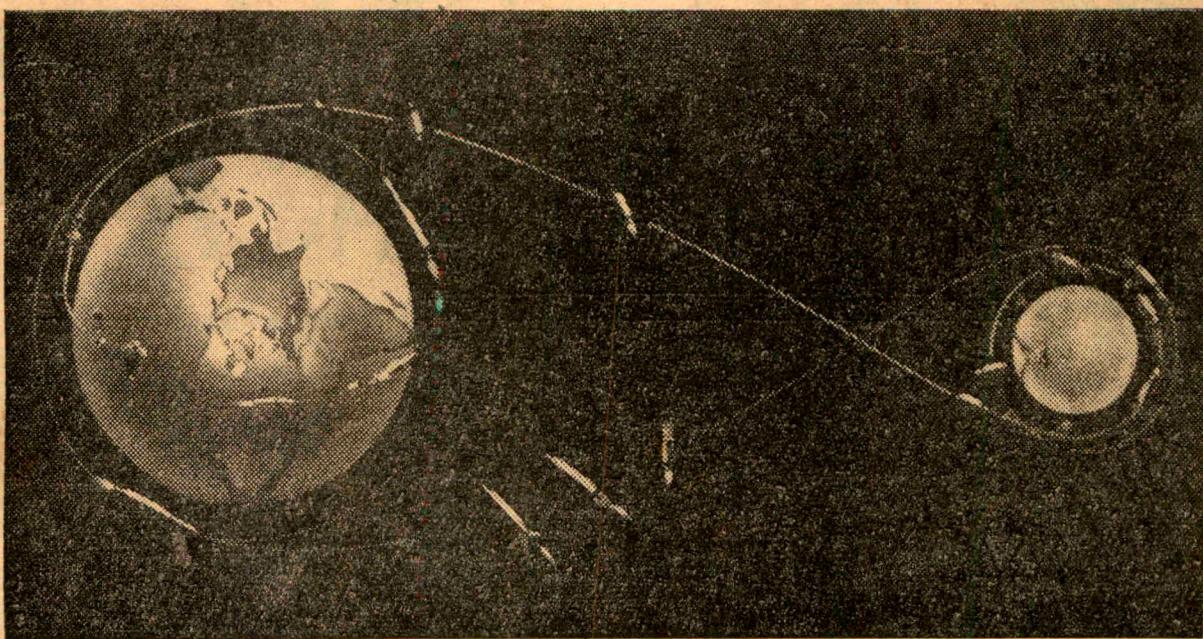
Saila

By ALIAS

This boy is studying the reflection of his face in the bowl of a well-polished silver spoon. The reflection is there but the artist has made a glaring scientific error. See if you can find it.

Ans : The image on the concave side of the spoon will be up side down. !

Give me the Moon!



SANAT BISWAS

M

EN have always been fascinated by the sky. They have yearned to know about this vast void, and the heavenly bodies high above. But men could not go there. Therefore, centuries upon centuries, generation after generation, since his creation, man and all his machines were forced to remain upon the surface of the earth or its immediate vicinity. Until, in the mid years of this 20th Century, man was able to develop efficient rockets and he finally broke the shackles of the earth's gravity.

The United States and the Soviet Union developed rockets so powerful that they could penetrate the atmosphere and plunge into space beyond. They could carry with them cameras and other information gathering instruments. Photographs and data thus collected could be retrieved after landing on the earth or it could be sent through the radio transmission from the rocket.

Thus, with precisely controlled rockets, we were able to lift small spacecraft above the earth, then placed them into orbits that allowed them to rotate around the earth for days or weeks or even months or many years. They were artificial moons—or satellites—built and controlled by man on earth. An entirely new tool for exploration of outer space was at last in hand—and with it began a new era, the Space Age.

The Soviet Union launched a series of Sputniks into orbit, and the United States began the Space Age with its Explorer, Pioneer and Vanguard satellites.

The first manned Apollo test flight ended in tragedy struck before the mission could ever begin.

During a rehearsal while the spacecraft was atop the rocket at Cape Kennedy on January 27, 1967, fire erupted inside the cabin resulting in the death of astronauts Grissom, who was to have commanded the mission, and his crew, Edward White II, and Roger Chaffee.

In the almost 22 months of delay caused by the fire and investigations into the fire's causes, the Apollo spacecraft's interior was rebuilt to reduce fire hazards. This lengthy pause in U.S. manned space exploration also permitted space planners to make numerous other improvements in the craft and auxiliary facilities.

When Apollo-11 astronauts successfully stepped on the lunar surface and collected moon soils for examination on earth to reveal the origin of the moon and the universe at large, a new chapter in the history of mankind has been created. Since their arrival on earth with lunar samples and subsequent examinations have produced more new information about the moon than hitherto obtained by telescopes.

The evidence indicates a present day moon uniformly 'cool' throughout, unlike earth with its distinct layers of cool crust, warm underlying mantle, and molten metal-rock core. Taken together, the findings suggest that the moon may be like a great shattered brittle ball beneath its crust, fractured into huge rock blocks with fissures and cracks penetrating deep down into the moon's interior.

The rocks range in size from pebbles to cobblestone and are darkish grey in colour. Some are crystalline in structure, some are mixed with metallic ores such as ilium, a common earth compound that is a source of titanium. Very recent analysis reveals that the moon is a good place for prospecting titanium but there is no gold, silver or platinum as it was thought before.

Nevertheless, what does all this information mean? In fact, no one knows for sure. But it seems to fit in nicely with the theory that the moon was formed about the same time as the earth, but independently, from flaming debris and gases thrown off by the rapidly rotating primitive sun. The new information suggests that the earth and the moon are at about the same stage of cooling. And thus, the relatively untouched and unchanged lunar surface gives science a natural laboratory to study the early history of the moon, earth and the planets.



JENNIFER D'SILVA

According to an old Chinese legend the story of silk began about 2700 B.C. in the garden of a Chinese Emperor. One day, a beautiful young empress, named Si-Ling-Chi, while sitting in the garden saw a worm on the mulberry tree. She was fascinated by this creature and more so when she noticed that from its mouth, it produced a thread as fine as a cobweb, yet as shiny as a lovely golden colour. Si-Ling-Chi watched in wonder as the thread became longer and longer and the worm wrapped it round and round itself to make a cocoon. The young empress began to wonder how she would look in a gown made from the threads of many such cocoons.

In the years that followed, the empress spent many hours a day unravelling these cocoons, until she had enough of the silken fibres to spin together into a thread. Finally, she was able to weave a material from these delicate threads, the finest material ever seen at that time. This material was given the name Si and it is still the Chinese word for 'silk'.

The Chinese guarded their secret as closely as possible and some years passed before any country learnt the secret of how this lustrous material was produced. It is said that the first two countries to have discovered this secret were India and Japan. It is not definitely known how they came to discover this secret but one thing is definite, that the next to follow in their footsteps were the Romans.

A story is told of how a Roman Emperor named Justinian, saw how important the silk trade was and determined that he would create a trade in silk for the Roman Empire. So he secretly sent two monks to China to get eggs of the silk moths. The two monks got some of these precious eggs, hid them in a hollow bamboo and then carried them to Constantinople. In this way the Emperor was able to set up a silk factory in Rome.

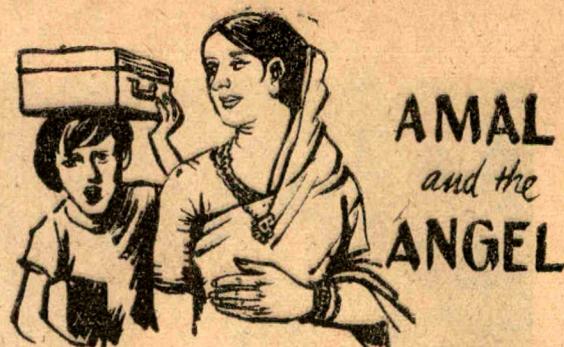
But in the course of time, the eggs of the silk moth were carried to other countries. In Italy and France many towns became famous for silk manufacture. This secret rapidly spread throughout Europe and many silk industries were set up for the rearing of these silk worms. The U.S.A. is the world's largest manufacturer of silk.

Silk is one of the finest, lightest and strongest of fibres. It is very smooth because of which dirt does not cling to it easily.

Men have woven this fine cobweb like thread in various ways, thus giving us a wide variety of silk materials, such as satin, velvet, crepe and brocade. Silk is bleached and then is dyed in all colours of the rainbow.

In the olden days, this material was not only beautiful in design or rich in colour, but it also spoke of wealth. The nobles dressed in gorgeous robes of silk and velvet. The gloomy walls of the palaces were covered with silk hangings and the beds were draped with heavy silks called brocades. Curtains for churches were also made from this rich fabric.

However, these days the importance of silk has



HELEN REILLY

In a crowded 'busti', just near the noisy market-place, little Amal sat outside his hut, gazing with wistful eyes at his friends. They were discussing the events of the coming 'Ratha Fair'. He could picture the boys pulling the ropes of the big car. How he longed to go with them, but he couldn't. Amal had no money, or clothes and no new sandals. Without realizing it, his skinny little arms tightened about his knees, while he sat there dreaming of those happy old days.

Amal was only ten, but he could remember the day, two years ago when his mother and father and youngest sister Anju had died due to cholera that had swept through their locality. They had not always lived in a 'busti'. Amal used to live in a clean house that had a little balcony, where Anju and he used to play. He remembered the preparations that took place for the Puja season. How his mother bought them new clothes and the delicious sweets she made!

But alas! Two long years had gone and for Amal there were no more preparations for Puja. He had come to live at the 'busti' with his grandmother. Many times she reminded him that they could not afford luxuries. Amal brushed his tears away with the back of his hand.

Suddenly, a shadow fell across Amal's feet. Startled, he looked up and found a strange lady smiling down at him. Amal remembered what his mother had said about being polite. He quickly jumped up and asked the lady what she wanted. The lady told him that she had lost her way and wondered if Amal could take her back to the bus-stop.

Quietly he walked beside her and soon found himself telling her about his desire to go to the fair. He carried her heavy bags for her and shyly looking at her, found that she was a very rich lady. Before climbing into the bus, she put a loving hand on Amal's head and told him that kind little boys always got their reward. She gave Amal the heaviest basket of hers and left him.

Amal hurried home and opened the basket in front of his grandmother. He gasped with delight when he saw that there were clothes for him, a lovely saree for his grandmother, sweets and toys and everything that a little boy could wish for was in the basket! He knew without a doubt that he would have a lovely time at the fair and he would always remember the kind old lady for making him the happiest boy in the world!

decreased. For men are manufacturing fibres for weaving which are very much like silk. Materials are being made from these new fabrics so successfully that the demand for real silk is growing less and less.

MONUMENTS

ROBERTA RENNY

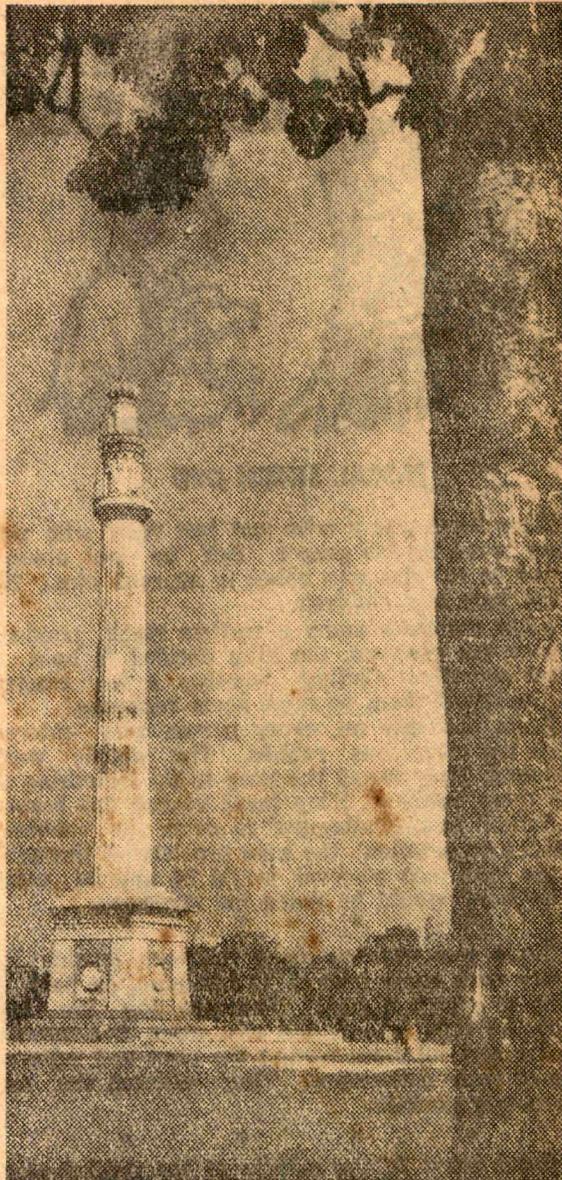
Monuments are buildings, pillars or statues which are erected in memory of some great people or a great event. Monuments are of different classes; some are scientific, some biographical, some historic while others are of scenic beauty. Some monuments are ancient, fantastic and of grotesque appearance too.

Among the many beautiful buildings of India, the Taj Mahal is the most exquisite and far famed, and the story it enshrines is as beautiful as the Taj itself. The beautiful, elegant and charming Mumtaz Mahal who was crown of the palace, entered into all undertakings with her husband. When she died, it was as if the thought of his life had gone out, and he built a most beautiful building in the world to perpetrate her memory. This beautiful building has hushed all criticism into silence—a dream in white marble, exquisite in shape and proportions, delicate in ornaments.

Besides buildings being set up in memory of people, there is a monument of a sea-gull erected at Salt Lake City in the United States. This was constructed to the memory of fine service it once rendered to the State of Utah. The State was once invaded by hordes of grass hoppers, who devoured every green thing they came across. This was very disheartening to the farmers. Disaster seemed imminent but at that critical moment a flock of wild sea gulls flew in from the Pacific and set busily eating the myriads of winged insects.

Is it true that there is a monument to an apple? This may seem strange but there is one in a field of Madison County, Iowa, in the United States, where stands a monument to a tree of the variety known as the delicious apple. More than fifty years ago a young farmer planted an orchard and started to grow apples. When the shoot issued from the root of the dead tree trunk it grew into a tree and produced apples of a different variety—big red apples. This did not attract any notice until one day, the farmer sent the apple to a big show. The judge taking a bite exclaimed, "Delicious! Delicious!" And ever since that day the apple has become famous all over the world. The tree, now about a century old, is still surrounded by a fence and beside it is a granite monument with an inscription in its honour.

In Calcutta itself many statues have been erected in honour of great leaders. In the city, we

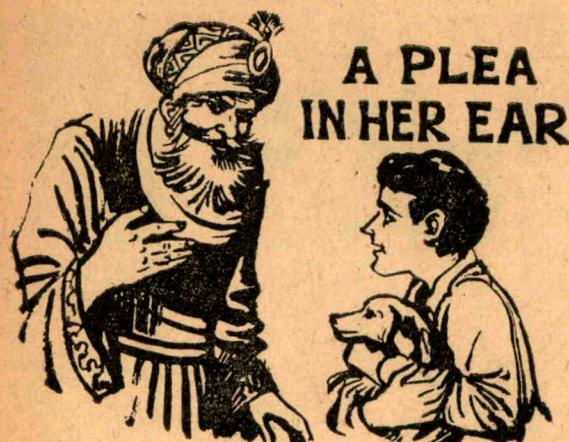


D. SONA

have an extraordinary statue of Mahatma Gandhi. The Victoria Memorial, statues of great persons cast in stone and bronze today, stand as proof that Calcutta has had its share of the glorious past.

In England there are many buildings which keep the name of Christopher Wren alive. His greatest triumph was the dome which from the outside is one of the finest in Europe and is beautifully flanked by two tapering towers over the facade, one containing the church bell and the other the clock. This dome was "labelled" by a girl who had been to see St. Paul's and made a rough sketch from memory. "Look," said she, "I've drawn the dome of London." Wren would have been pleased with the description for he was determined that his dome should be unequalled.

Monuments are found in various places in the world. They are not erected to decorate places and give it a fascinating view to foreigners but to mark the memory of a particular person who had rendered his or her services to the country.



JASPAL SINGH DEO

King Insaf was a wise and just ruler who was greatly loved by his people. But he was always worried as to who was going to succeed him. He did not have any children.

After spending many a restless night pondering over the problem, the king decided to hold a contest secretly. Calling together a few trusted men, he asked them to stage some robberies.

From that day on, every person who entered or left the city was robbed. The people were frightened. They asked the king to do something to catch these 'robbers'. King Insaf 'racked' his brains, but 'failed' in his 'attempts' to catch the 'robbers'. In 'sheer desperation', the king proclaimed throughout the land that whoever would be able to catch the 'robbers' would be made his successor.

* * * *

Sarat was walking along the road leading to the city with some friends. In his hand, he held a basket in which a small Pekinese dog lay fast asleep. As they neared the city gates, five masked men stepped out from behind the trees and relieved them of their possessions. They entered the city with empty pockets.

* * * *

Sarat stood in the middle of the market-place and announced in his stentorian voice that he was going to catch the robbers. Nearly all the passers-by listened to his boastful words and soon a large crowd had collected around him.

"Let's see you catch those robbers," sneered someone in the crowd.

"Is he the 'Wizard of Oz'?" asked a small man sarcastically.

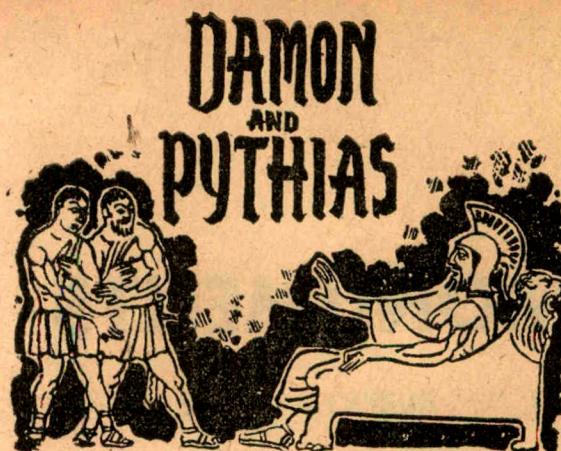
Sarat ignored the taunting jeers and waited until he was the cynosure of every eye. Then, he set the basket on the ground. The little Pekinese dog jumped out of it and began to frisk about. Kneeling down, Sarat whispered 'a plea in her ear'.

With what seemed like uncanny intelligence, the dog began to sniff at the clothes of every man in the crowd. At first, it looked as if nothing would happen but suddenly, the dog backed away from one man and started to growl.

"Go on," ordered Sarat.

The dog continued its sniffing and growled at four other men. Every time it did this, Sarat ordered it to go on and it obediently obeyed its master.

Calling the five men who had been growled at, forward, Sarat addressed the crowd, "These are the robbers!!" There was a hush all around. Sarat continued, "If you search their pockets, you'll find some gold coins coated with cheese". The accused



Dionysius was indeed a cruel tyrant, who ruled the town of Syracuse in Sicily. Anyone who made him angry was sentenced to death. Such a thing as this happened to a young man called Pythias, who did not approve of the tyrant's way of ruling. His beliefs reached the ears of Dionysius who passed the order for Pythias to be executed. Pythias had but one last desire to go and see his family. Dionysius, of course, scorned the idea. For he suspected that his prisoner might not return. Pythias then proposed that a friend would be willing to die in his place if he did not return from his journey. Damon, Pythias's friend, came forward to assure the tyrant ruler that he would be most willing to die in Pythias's place should the need arise. The bond of friendship which they professed so amazed the ruler that he decided to give Pythias six horses to take him home, which was some way from town.

Time flew by and the sixth hour had nearly closed. The time appointed for the execution of Pythias was fast approaching. Dionysius was in a fever of excitement and he morbidly wanted to see his prisoner die. The sixth hour had passed but there was still no sign of Pythias. Nevertheless, Damon cheerfully accepted his fate. As the execution was about to begin, Pythias broke through the crowds and embraced Damon. Pythias seemed weak and tired. He explained that his horse had been killed and getting another had meant a great deal of trouble. He also had had to ride very fast to make up lost time and to save his friend from an undeserved fate. Pythias was much relieved to be able to save his friend, Damon. But Damon pleaded that he should be executed to save Pythias. It was clear that one of them had to die. Their strange dispute continued until Dionysius walked up to them, took their hands and told them that they were free men. The love and friendship between the two men had overwhelmed Dionysius. He only asked to be able to share their friendship.

Re-told from the original tale
by BONANI ROY

men were searched and just as Sarat had said, there were some cheese-coated coins in their pockets. The 'robbers' and Sarat were taken before the king.*

* * * * *
King Insaf was amazed on hearing how Sarat was able to catch the 'robbers'. Asked for an explanation, Sarat said, "Your Majesty, it was nothing. My Pekinese dog loves cheese and she naturally walked up to the men who smelt of cheese the robbers."

King Insaf was pleased. He smiled as he thought of how safe his kingdom would be in Sarat's hands.

Disneyland

THE MAGIC KINGDOM

BY
PIGIEL

"Disneyland will never be complete," said Walt Disney.

How delightfully true this is, can be understood from the outlook of its maker-founder. Because, the moment it is regarded as complete, it will mean the end of that story. No more new ideas, no more original treatment, no more new brainwaves to entertain the visitor. It will be a thing of the past. And visitors would come to see that once upon a time there was a Disneyland.

When I reached Disneyland in the little township of Anaheim via Santa Anna Freeway some twentyfive miles south east of Los Angeles in 1960, mid September, I felt that I am approaching a fancy fair giant mela. No, not like a Blackpool or a Coney Island stuff to entertain the average public with sensationalism, and sex.

But with people of imagination and understanding, here is what makes Disneyland original: ● A toy railway engine with that giant funnel of yesterday puffing steam sound waiting at the Disneyland station entrance platform with ticket collectors at the main-gate and a chain of four wheeler out of date rail cars behind. This whole affair is operated through electricity. That railway station shed is a precious out of date piece with a big clock on its clock tower indicating time in Roman numerals and plain homely gongs.

Actually, you find that you have entered a fairy-land, Mr. Disney's imagination and treatment is so wonderfully perfect and original. He treats his subject on items of space and time. For instance, periodwise they represent *Tomorrow Land* of futuristic treatment: ● A rocket model standing with toy rockets with seats for visiting children on

them going round in the air above the ground. Also futuristic treatment of *Houses of Tomorrow* with futuristic gadgets etc. for their owners. Then there is the *Main Street* representing horse drawn tram cars, open air double deckers with houses on both sides of the street that existed yesterday.

Then, there are areas representing *Fantasyland* with the *Sleeping Beauty* in a fairy castle of Hans Andersen's imagination. There are also Toylands, liliput size, representing Mickey Mouses, a little liliput house with roads leading to it. A toy canal with toy bridges and top snow clad mountains around through which our visitors' gondola may pass. And visiting children greeting Mickey Mouse with their hands up aloud: "Hello, Mr. Mickey, and Mr. Toad, what are you doing there?"

This *Fantasyland* with Mediaeval Baron atmosphere beside *Sleeping Beauty Castle*, and *Mickey Mouse Club Theatre*, include many other things. I just give a bit of the whole fanfare:

- *Casey Juniors' Circus Train* that goes up and down a toy valley with tigers and lions, being dragged by a little giant funnelled toy engine operated by electricity.

- *Dumbo Flying Elephants*: Little toy elephants with seats for children and adults on them flying round and round a Maypole.

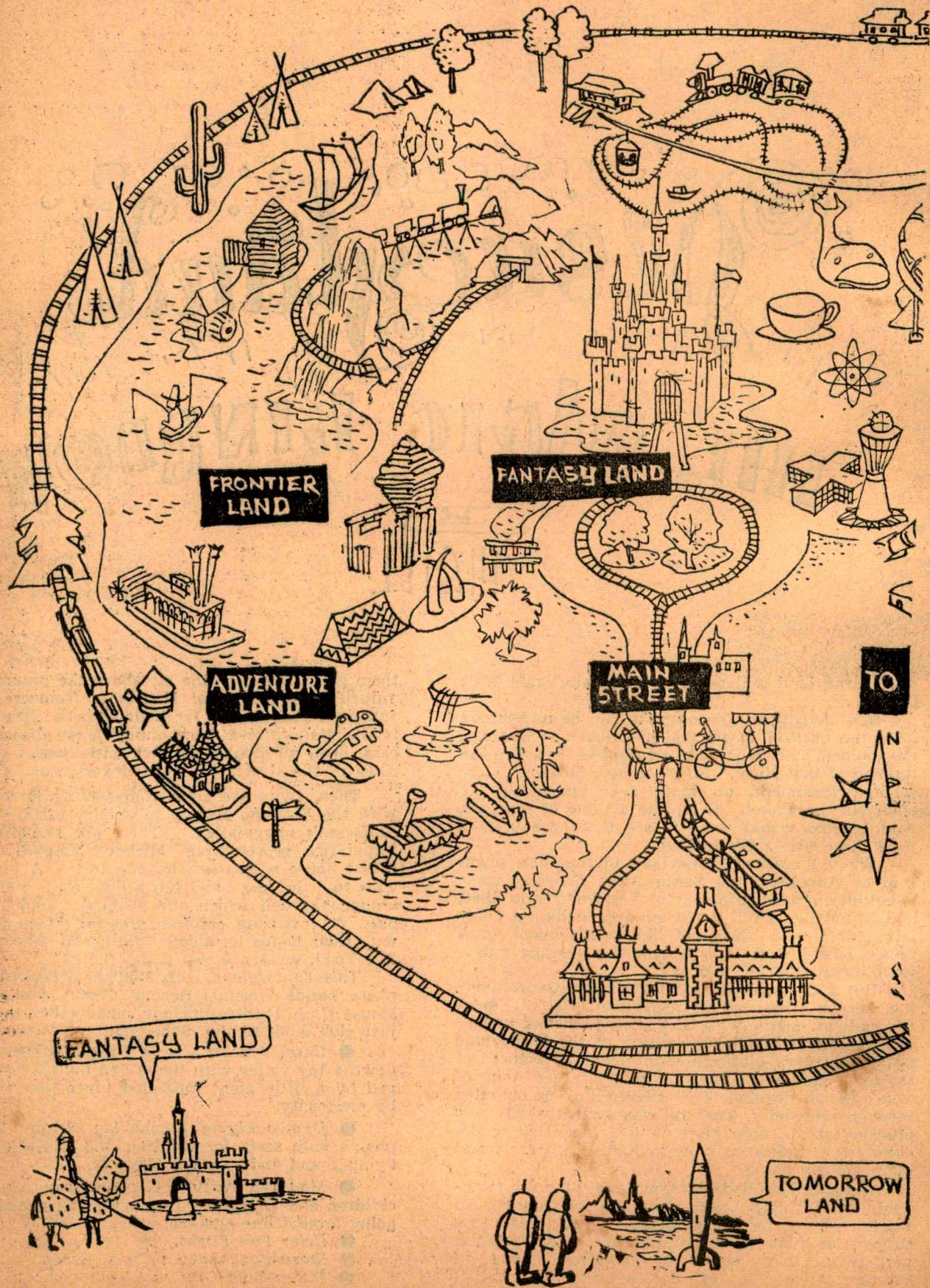
- *Mad Tea Party*: Giant cups with seats for children and adults within moving round and round going around one another.

- *Peter Pan Flight*.

- *Story Book Land* : Canal Boats.

- *Motor Boat Cruise* : I enjoyed a ride on it and ride the entire route winding through boulders

MAP OF DISNEYLAND



and submarine rocks, and under bridges, but very carefully guarded from accident through an under-water electrical device.

- *Snow White Adventures.*
- *Skyway to Tomorrow Land:* This is a device of a big ropeway with little hanging gondolas with two seats in each. This aerial pair of rope-ways from a Swiss Chalet placed on a high mound one coming in and one going out. This whole affair gives you a view of the eastern side of Disneyland and the ropeway passes through two tunnels cut through a giant toy Matter-horn of the Alps and the ropeway gondolas finally come to a stop down at the Tomorrow Land Station.
- There is another feature: A toy monorail train going round and round the Matterhorn rock and above the station from where submarine voyages go down with passengers to see the Underwater World. Dr. Radhakrishnan did this submarine programme in 1963 while he was President of Indian Republic. This was exhibited in Indian News Reel.

In the Tomorrow land section there is a Toy Planetarium. Its most dynamic programme shows visitors going to Moon in a Moon rocket chamber. It is a wonderful device: All the visitors within the Planetarium first feel the vibrating zooming sound of the Planetarium structure itself like a space chamber. Up in the centre of Space dome is a Full Moon. Gradually, the Moon starts becoming larger and larger. Simultaneously down on the Planetarium floor is the whole picture of Disneyland gradually becoming smaller and smaller to exhibiting the whole Pacific coast. Then the whole of America, then the whole of mother Earth and finally to the Earth Planet with star spangled blue sky all around. Now you look up: And lo! The whole Planetarium dome is covered with the picture of the giant Moon with the Moon map details full of craters etc. The visitors have reached the Moon.

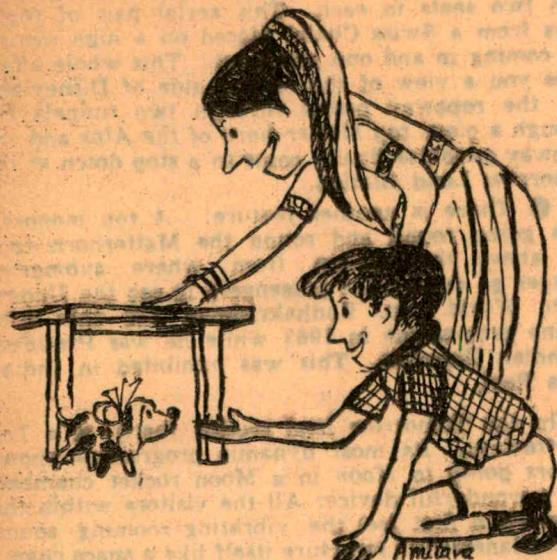
On coming out, I informed the gate girl that I had seen this very same programme treatment in San Francisco Planetarium. "Yes. They took special permission from Walt to use this device in their Planetarium", replied the girl.

I think, I am feeling lost in Walt's Dianey's forest of imagination. So, I must cut short. Let me put an end to the whole story after just a few selected items from Disney's Adventureland and Disney's Frontierland. The Adventureland shows a jungle river in a jungle boat cruise with Hippos putting their heads out with gaping maws at visitors doing the boat cruise.

- The Frontierland items show a Minitrain through Nature's Wonderland. This includes Grand Canyon, nature's giant grottos with red blue fountains dripping down the walls. Then there are Indian War Canoes showing Red Indians in full dress rowing them. And the Painted Valley with shorting geyzers, etc.
- *Shooting Gallery Frontierland:* The treatment is Buffalo Bill Pattern treatment of America going mid West.
- *Pack Mules through Nature's Wonderland:* Showing wild Arizona treatment of giant cactus and Red Indian Wigwam tents in the scene.

To do justice to Walt Disney is impossible. It is he who planned visually the New York World Fair with Dynosarus of day before yesterday, fighting. And how many of us do know that Disney did the Circarama entertainment device that was shown in Calcutta Ranji stadium a few years ago, And how many still do know that in the ushering music to Calcutta's "Calling All Children" programme was Disney's dancing mushrooms in his inimitable Fantasia?

THE GIFT THAT



RAN AWAY

PROSHANT BANERJEE

It was Ratan's birthday. He jumped out of bed and dressed quickly. "Come to breakfast, Ratan", called mother. "Hurry up. There is a gift waiting for you."

Then she went to the kitchen. Ratan could hardly wait to see his gift. Would it be a pretty one? Would it be a funny one? He ran down the stairs and into the dining room. But he did not see any present.

"Mother," he called, "where is my gift?"

"I put it on your chair," said mother.

"It isn't there," said Ratan.

"May be it jumped off", answered mother.
"Look under the table".

"Jumped off?" laughed Ratan. "How can a present jump? No, my gift is not under the table."

Mother came into the dining room. "Oh my", she said, "May be it is in the hall."

They looked in the hall. The gift was not there.

"Oh my, Ah me", said mother; "Look! the front door is open!"

Ratan laughed and laughed. "Do you think my gift ran away? It must have legs then."

"We must look for it", said mother. "Come help me."

They went out doors. They looked out. They looked under the Guava tree. They looked through the gate and down the steps; but they did not find the gift. Then they went into the house again. In the hall they saw some papers. They were torn to pieces and lay scattered all over the floor.

Ratan said, "mother, your gift did that!"

Ratan laughed and laughed again. Just then they heard a loud noise. It came from under a chair. And then Ratan's gift walked out! Now Ratan knew why mother had said his gift might have run away.

It was a puppy and it had a big red bow on its collar. Ratan was surprised. Oh, what a wonderful present! "Thank you mother," he said. "This is the best gift in the world!"

MORE THAN A MIRACLE

JAYES

The image of Durga looked magnificent in the golden rays of the setting sun. The fiery eyes and the yellow figure robed in a royal red saree and ten weapons in her ten hands had a beauty all their own.

The six children who were there at the 'Puja-pandāl' gazed at it in wonder. It was so real, so life-like.

"It looks good", commented Krishna.

"Too good", added Bijoy.

"There's nothing to beat it. It is beautiful", Ashoke put in his two paise bit.

"Yes. It is really beautiful. It looks as if....." Rekha was interrupted by a loud wail. It came from behind the tent where the image of Durga had been erected.

All the children kept quiet and listened. They were frightened. Was it a child-lifter? Where were the other two children.... Ranjan and Anjali? Had they been kidnapped? These were the questions that bothered Krishna's mind.

After a while, Kasi, the eldest of the lot, taking courage, shouted, "Who is there?"

There was no reply. Only silence.

Krishna tip-toed his way to the back of the tent. There was no child lifter. He gave a sigh of relief. There was only Anjali.... sprawled out on the ground and sobbing away.

Krishna shouted for the benefit of the other children. "There's no one here?"

As if in answer, all the children appeared except Ranjan. Where was he?

Ashoke helped Anjali to get up and asked, "What's happened? What are you crying for, you cry baby?"

Anjali tried to control her tears. "Ranjan stole my new packet of sweets and one rupee", she explained between sobs.

"Where's he gone?" asked Krishna.

"I don't know", was the reply.

"Don't worry. We'll catch him" consoled Bijoy.

Krishna thought for a while. How was he going to get Ranjan to give back Anjali her sweets and money, he asked himself. Ranjan would deny this and then suddenly an idea struck him.....

"Ranjan, where have you been all this time?" asked Bijoy.

"Just roaming about", was the reply from Ranjan.

"Why did you steal Anjali's sweets and money?" asked Krishna.

"What do you mean? I haven't even touched her", lied Ranjan.

"Come and swear by this image that you did not steal Anjali's things" said Ashoke, in a defying tone.

"Come men", said Ranjan scornfully and walked up to the image. "I did not steal Anjali's....."

"Do not lie, mortal", The image spoke!

Ranjan was stunned; he was taken aback. He was frightened. "Yes-yes-s, No-o-o. I I s s t o o l e f-f-f-r-r-o-m A Anjali". Ranjan stuttered out the truth.

As the children trudged back home, Krishna spoke to Rekha, "Your acting was good. Your voice really gave Ranjan a fit. It will teach him a lesson. Thanks."



GO, LOVELY ROSE...

JULIANA D'SILVA

It was January; the sky was overcast and snow-flakes brushed against the windows of the castle. Lady Anne stood waiting for her husband, due home from the Crusades.

Then, through the curtain of mist she saw three figures riding towards the castle. Eagerly, she ran to greet her husband and his two squires. After Sir Oswald had embraced his wife, he took out of his vest of chain mail, a small phial.

"This is for you, my dear," he told his wife. "Break the seal and smell it." Lady Anne breathed ecstatically.

"Why, it is like a breath of summer air," she sighed. "What is it?"

"It is rose water, all the way from the Holy Land," answered Sir Oswald. "Out there, there are roses, everywhere I have been."

Sir Oswald was right. The red rose first bloomed in India and Persia. From there, it wended its beautiful way along Mediterranean shores, until it was brought to England by the Romans. (In fact, the lovely Damask rose comes from Damascus in Syria!)

Persia, the birthplace of the rose was the first to make rose water as well as the attar of roses.

Legend goes that Jehan Ghir, a Mogul Emperor of Persia, loved his queen so much that he wanted everything around her to smell lovely. So he had a small canal in his garden filled with rose water. As his young and beautiful bride walked along this canal, she noticed a thick 'skin' forming on the fragrant water. Scooping some of it in her hand, she noticed it had an oily feel about it and that its scent was gorgeous. This she named Atat-jehangiri, meaning Jehan Ghir's perfume. From this name we have the famous attar of roses.

If you were attending a Roman feast, in ancient times, you would think you were walking in a rose garden. For the Romans used the rose in many ways. There were rose garlands on the walls and in vases. You would have walked on a 'carpet of roses' and eaten at a table decorated with roses. The guests would wear rose wreaths, and men would put on crowns of roses to prevent themselves from drinking too much. (Maybe, in case their conscience did not prick them, the thorns would!) And even the dishes were garnished with rose petals. Roman brides were crowned with rose petals, in honour of Flora, the goddess of roses.

Do you know what the expression 'under the

rose' means? In Tudor times, roses were often painted on the ceiling. The Jacobites, when holding a secret meeting, would pass the word around that a meeting was to be held 'under the rose'. Immediately, members hurried to the friend's house whose ceiling was painted with roses."

In the flora world, the rose is the 'messenger of love'. If you send a red rose to someone, it means your love will never die. (A white rose usually means peace). Indeed, the rose is love; as Thompson said, ". . . The rose's scent is bitterness to him that love the rose!"

Once, the red rose was used to pay rent. Notwithstanding all the scientific development, and modern medicine, people still take honey of roses for a sore throat and rose vinegar for a headache. Sprinkle rose water on your icing, and it gives an 'out of the world' taste. The rose is one of the flowers for which men brave the thorns to get it. You may "get a thorn with every rose. But ain't the rose sweet!"

The rose has a subtle, elusive scent which holds an attraction for all ages. It "decorates a lovely room, and makes up a summer garden. Nearly everything beautiful and wonderful under the sun has been compared to the rose. Poets, and sonnet writers have in their moments of eloquence, compared a lovely girl to a rose, and a blush to the delicate tinge of the fragile rose petals. Even,

"Baby said when she smelt the rose,
'Oh! What a pity I've only one nose!'

RIDDLES

- (1) What word of five letters has six left after you take two away?
- (2) Why is a traffic policeman the strongest man in the world?
- (3) What can't you name without breaking it?



- (4) When has a horse got six legs?
 - (5) What coin is double its value when 'half' is deducted?
 - (6) How long will an eight-day clock run without winding?
- Ans : (1) Sixty (2) because he can hold on a ten ton truck with one hand. (3) Silence. (4) When it has a rider. (5) Half-rupee. (6) It won't run at all without winding.



NEMAI GHOSH

FOR THEIRS SHALL
BE THE KINGDOM
OF HEAVEN

HEY, RICKSHAWALA!

BHAKTAVAR SUTARIA

The rickshaw man is as much a symbol of Calcutta as the majestic Victoria Memorial or the awe-inspiring Indian Museum. Yet there are those who cry—"Ban the rickshaw."

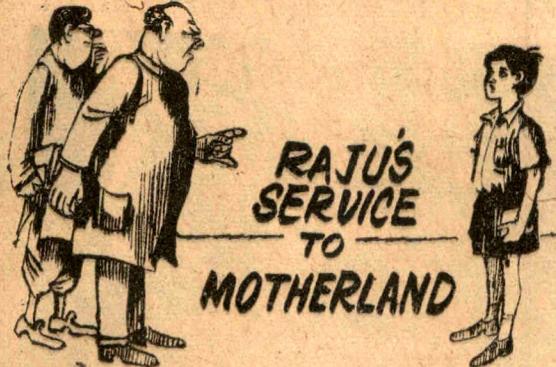
There are those who believe in safety in numbers. There will be four or five people crammed into one rickshaw, grumbling for all they are worth about the lack of space, but quite heedless of the Herculean effort that the rickshaw man is making, trying to pull that heavy load of human flesh and bones. He changes from a human being to a beast of burden.

What about the monsoons? Calcutta's clogged-up drains have long ceased to perform their functions. What has the rickshaw man to do when Calcutta's streets become little streams with the usual flotsam and jetsam effect? When the water is knee-high and the taxi-drivers refuse to carry fares.

Then comes the gallant rickshaw man. The knight errant to rescue many a fair damsel in distress. The rates he charges are exorbitant, but he, after all, is a human being too, with the human desire for profit. He bravely plods through the muddy water. The road is his and he is its master. Those, who all the year round look down their noses at the humble rickshaw, now thankfully jump into it. They cannot afford to be snobbish now, for there is just one choice—"Rickshaw it, or leg it."



SUBIMAL MITRA



TUTUL DAS GUPTA

Raju was hard put to study for the Inspector was to visit the School that day and the teachers had repeatedly advised the students to get their lessons prepared. As Raju was well-known in the school, the Headmaster had called him aside and said in an affectionate tone—"Preparation is not all my boy. You must be disciplined, well-behaved and try to answer his questions promptly, smartly yet humbly. I hope you will be able to impress the man."

Before starting from home, Raju recalled the image of Durga—the Benign Mother—and prayed to her.

In the nick of time, the Inspector entered the class-room accompanied by the Headmaster. Quite burly in appearance, he was neither assuming nor self-effacing, of a rich complexion with a mark of injury right on his forehead, with a bald head and the two eyes burning silently like those of a hawk.

"Who is the best boy in this class?"—He asked the Headmaster in a busy mood. The Headmaster at once pointed to Raju and said, "He is Rajib Sanyal."

"Well, what is the motto of your life?"—The Inspector put forth his question.

"My motto is to serve my motherland in whatever way I can within my limited capacity".—Bold was Raju's reply.

"That's a tall talk"—The Inspector frowned and turning to the Headmaster said, "Young minds nurture such lofty ambition as a rule. But as they grow older, they come to realise that there is only one purpose to serve under the Sun—that is their self-interest."

He burst into laughter at his own fun but suddenly came to a halt.

"Perhaps you are wrong, Sir"—Raju said in a voice deeply sad and sombre.

"Service to motherland means service to people and whenever I meet a poor man, I try to relieve him with food, clothes or even sweet words."

Before the Inspector could tell anything, another boy stood up and said, "Sorry to disturb you, Sir. Let me tell you the truth. On way to school, Raju regularly pays five annas to an ailing beggar who sits under a banyan tree and is blind of one eye."

The Inspector stood still for a while and then stepping forward patted Raju on his back. "You are blessed my child. I am sorry for my remark. It passed my imagination that a boy of your age might be at a real service to his motherland in such a simple but significant way." The whole class greeted the speech uproariously. Raju bowed down his face ashamed.



O. P. BHAGAT

One day a crow found a walnut. He picked it up and flew to a safe place to eat it.

He put the walnut on the ground and pecked it. The shell was hard and did not crack. He pecked again and again. Yet the walnut did not break.

The crow was in a fix. He was hungry, but unless the walnut broke he could not eat it. He could think of no other way of cracking it. After a while, he pecked it again, harder than before. He went on doing it until his beak ached. But the walnut did not show the smallest crack.

To ease his beak, the crow stopped pecking. His feathers were disarranged. He was more hungry than before. But even if he pecked again, he thought, the walnut would not break. His eyes were wet and dull with disappointment.

On a tree close by was sitting a squirrel. He had noticed the crow when he came there with the walnut. His mouth watered and he wished he had that fat brown nut. But it was no joke to take it away from the hungry crow. So he thought what to do.

Soon an idea came to his head. He crawled down the tree and went up to the crow. "You look worried," he said in a friendly tone. "Is there anything I can do for you?"

"I found this walnut," replied the crow. "But it is harder than stone. My beak aches with pecking it, but it would not break. I don't know what to do."

The squirrel pretended to be thinking. Then he said, "I have an idea. If you drop the walnut from above, it will surely break."

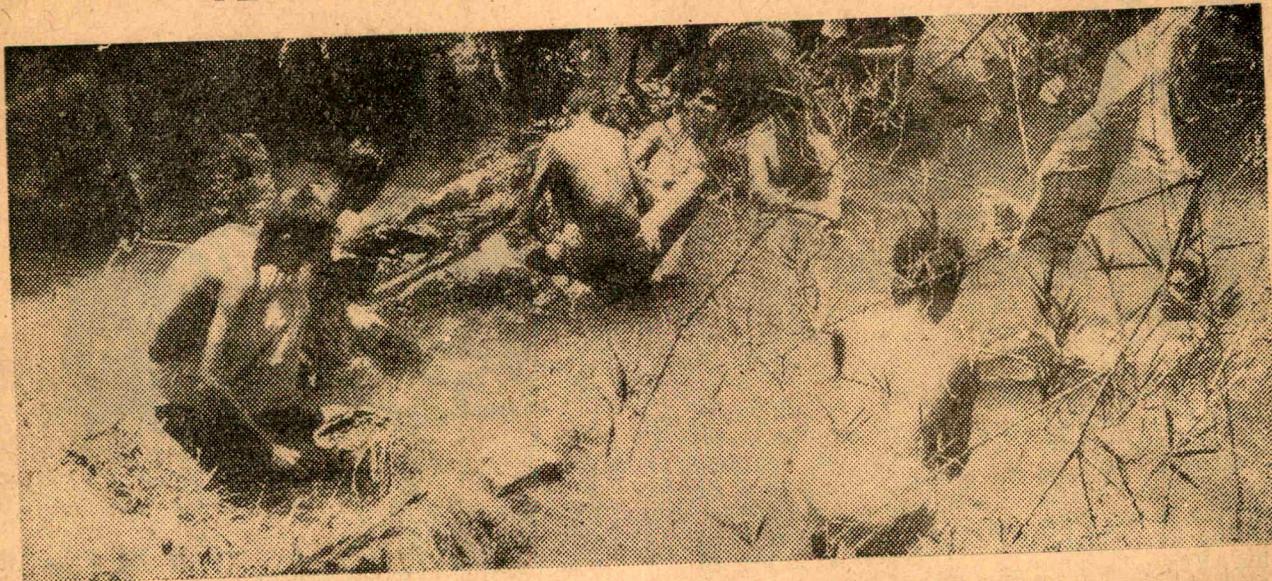
The crow hopped with joy. He thanked the squirrel for his advice, and, picking up the walnut, he flew up into the air.

"Higher," encouraged the squirrel. "A little higher yet."

The crow went higher than the tallest tree growing around there and dropped the walnut. It fell on a rock and broke into several pieces. The crow saw this and was delighted. He began to come down to satisfy his hunger.

By the time he came to the ground, the squirrel had grabbed the pieces of walnut and disappeared into the hollow of a tree.

TEN DAYS CAMP AT SOMNATH



SIDDHARTHA BANERJEE

Four of us represented the Kalyani University at the ten days' Work Orientation Camp held at Somnath in the month of May this year (21st May, to 31st May, 1969). This is not that historical Somnath of Gujarat. It is situated in a jungle area 30 miles away from Chandrapur (in short Chanda) of Maharashtra.

When destruction, despair, division and exploitation pervade the country, the Somnath camp started a new chapter with a goal to unite the Indians and show them the path of peace and progress through work. It started with an idea of better understanding with people not only of different States but also of different classes and creeds irrespective of their social status, and thus to foster in them a spirit of fellow-feeling and a more rational outlook.

The distinctive feature of the camp was that it was an all-Indian gathering where people from nearly all walks of life united for a single goal "Unity and Progress".

There were smart, dutiful South Indians, spirited Sardaris, hospitable Gujaratis and Maharashtraans and the sturdy Punjabis.

In the evening we used to gather in the "Chao-ni" the central meeting place. Everyday some or other entertainment used to be held there. Dramas and caricatures used to be enjoyable. On the last day the Punjabi party presented their famous Bhangra dance.

The artists selected a spot to exhibit their creations. Gautam was the painter of our team. His work was much appreciated by all.

At times I used to philosophize "This camp is a zoo.....but with some intellectual animals".

For daily meals we used to gather under a big roof. The campers in groups served the food prepared by rehabilitated lepers.

The reader might put a question, "Who are those people cured of leprosy, how did they come there at all?" They are the men for whom we were there, they are the people who were once discarded by society—now they have a society of their own. Actually, Baba Amte gathered some lepers, nursed them and after they were cured fully, they were rehabilitated in new ways of living. There is a Leprosium at Anandan, few miles from the camp.



After their recovery they came to Somnath to help their fellowmen to turn jungles into green fields. They are the men who made those constructions for our stay long before we reached Somnath and they are the people who will work in those fields where people from all over India once gathered and thus inspired them all. We were there not only to inspire but also to learn, we were there not with the vanity of a donor but with the humility of a seeker. For they are the men to tackle Nature.

At the last meeting at the 'Chao-ni' Baba Amte mounted the platform with tears in his eyes and in a trembling voice bade us all 'good bye'. We saddened our friends for the last time with the words, "Let us turn to our memories when we are far apart so that we will always be together, together, together".

Somnath camp was an interesting experiment in national integration. This camp unlike others had some features unique to itself. It helped us to love our soil. The youngmen's belief in their capabilities were confirmed. The campers departed with a hope that similar camps in other parts of India will help to preserve the integrity and solidarity of our motherland.

IVAN SASSON

tells us about...

THE ODDS IN ENGLISH

The English language has its delightful idiosyncrasies, one being that words do not mean what they literally appear. The foxtrot is not a dance in which couples gyrate like foxes. Mr. Fox was a dancing instructor in New York and he gave it that name. Similarly, foxglove is not a glove made out of fox's skin but a special European flower, white and purple in colour.

A crow's nest has almost lost its original meaning; a nest for a crow. Today, you'll either find it on a lady's head (as a special type of hair-style) or on the main mast of a ship as a lookout or watch tower. A hornet's nest is a situation, at once complicated and full of problems and pains. A mare's nest refers to some figment of the imagination.

Ask anyone and he'll tell you that bucket shop is definitely not a shop selling buckets. At least not now. In the late 19th century a bucket shop was a cheap drinking saloon, to which you brought an empty bucket that you filled with an evening's supply of wine. Today, it is associated with racing. A bucketshop bet on a horse is laid with a bookie.

A drawing-room is certainly not a room where children draw within or on walls. It is a corruption of withdrawing room, a room to which women withdrew after dinner, allowing their men to loll over their smokes and drinks.

Canterbury bells are flowers so called because they looked so much like the bells on the horses of pilgrims going to Canterbury cathedral on pilgrimages. Chaucer, the great English writer, wrote about these pilgrims in his Canterbury Tales. The shamrock is not a type of faked rock but a flower, which is the symbol of England.

Adam's ale was not a Garden of Eden preparation of a strong drink but plain and simple water.

A chairman is not one who buys, sells or dusts chairs, but a person who conducts a meeting.

The Iron Curtain is not a curtain of iron but a phrase coined by Winston Churchill to refer to the secrecy that went on in Russia behind the Iron Curtain.

The Bamboo Gurtain is in China, which is pretty dangerous today.

Scotland Yard is no yard in Scotland, but the headquarters of England's detective force, originally a place where Scottish rulers, who visited England, lived in.

A bluestocking is not a blue stocking to cover one's legs. Ladies who are literary-minded and have culture at their fingertips were dubbed bluestockings because they used to have literary evening.

Similarly a scapegoat is really not a goat—it is a person. It is a corruption of escape goat, a goat the Jews of yesterday used to sacrifice on the Day of Atonement. With the goat was sacrificed all their sins. Hence, the scapegoat is a convenient fellow who takes the blame for someone else.

and is also...

THE QUIZ MASTER

Many stars are 1000 times brighter than our sun. Some are, in fact, 600,000 times brighter.

Needless were one of the first tools ever made by man. Some have been found in the ruins and graves of all old civilizations.

The giant radio telescope at Jodrell Bank, Cheshire (England) can even spot stars so far away that their light has not reached us. If you want to see these stars with your naked eye, you will have to wait 4,700 years.

Apples, raspberries, strawberries, peaches, cherries and apricots are all members of the rose family.

Your foot has 52 distinct bones and one of God's greatest feats of construction.

The Library of Congress, U.S.A., has 54,000,000 books.

Paper clips are most valuable to hold papers together but only 16 per cent of them are used for this purpose. Twenty per cent are used as counters in office card games. Five per cent are used to manicure. Fourteen per cent are twisted and pulled apart. Five per cent are used as tooth picks. Seven per cent are used to keep clothes together. The rest are dropped on the ground.

The fastest bird in the world is the peregrine falcon. In a verticle dive, it can do 200 mph.

A popular tree has 70,000 leaves. An apple tree has 100,000 leaves. A birch tree has 200,000 leaves. An oak tree has 700,000 leaves. An elm tree has 5,000,000 leaves. Leaves you shocked, doesn't it?

Do you know that we have enough salt in all the oceans to raise a mountain of salt higher than any on earth.

The cattle of Northern Russia wear spectacles so that they are not blinded by blizzards.

The male alligator is a strange fellow. He can make a noise loud enough to be heard a mile away. But when you're close, he stops in without a sound.

Every grain of sugar has sixteen sides.

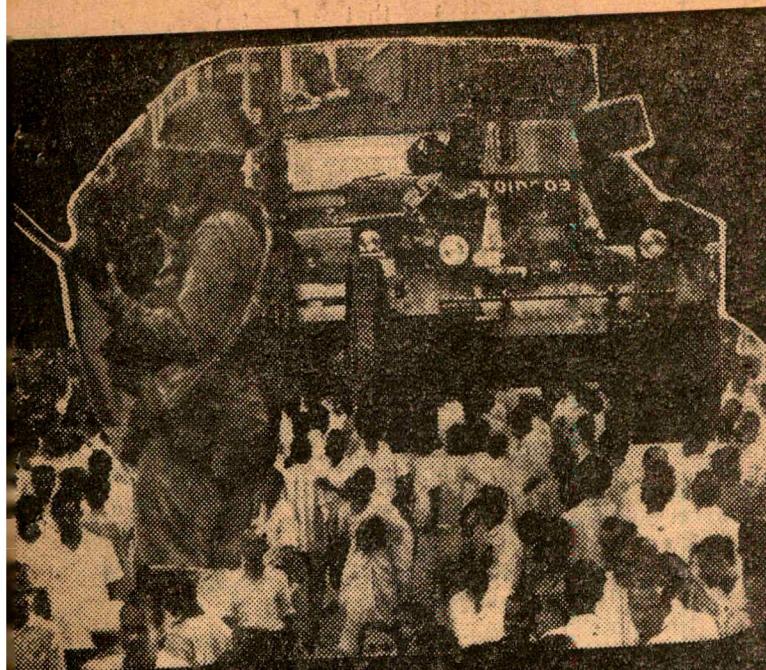
An elephant trunk is so cleverly made that it can lift a ton and yet is delicate enough to uproot a single blade of grass. So he's not such an awkward fellow after all.

The South Pole lies beneath 8,300 feet of snow though hardly six inches of snow fall every year.

After millions come billions, then trillions, then quadrillions, then quintillions, then sextillions, then septillions, then octillions, then nonillions, then decillions, then undecillions, then duodecillions, then tredecillions, then quattuordecillions, then quindecillions, then sextecillions, then septendecillions, then octodecillions, then nonemdecillions, then vigintillions, then centillions. I don't suppose anyone's had more money than that, so the mathematicians stopped there. Thank God!

THE DEVOTED





AMIT ROY



THE trouble with being a newspaper man is that, sooner or later, you begin to think of life as being merely a succession of stories. I suppose it is inevitable that as events follow one another in rapid succession, as the focus of interest shifts from one corner of the globe to another, you can be certain of nothing except that your next story is going to come from the most unexpected quarters. This objectivity is commendable, indeed without it newspaper reporting would lose much of its authenticity, but I suspect most newspaper people go through life regarding all people rather as characters in a novel. I have known newspaper people all my life but so far I have yet to meet a newspaper man worth his salt who has been capable of relaxing. In the language that is peculiar to journalists, 'news sense' refers to a man's ability to discern from a jumble of events what might be of interest to his readers. It becomes an instinct, a sixth sense if you like which never really leaves the man. On a bus, on a train, on a plane, even on holiday, it lingers in his subconscious. That is why I say I have never known a newspaper man who had the gift of being able to relax completely. I know that on holiday my friends often find me quite exasperating, but try as I might I am unable to switch off my mind which remains on the constant lookout for stories with 'news value'. I also know that I often go to bed thinking of the possible display that I might give to a story, whether the caption might not look better in italics rather than straight type, whether the article calls for a melodramatic introduction or a more leisurely one, whether a certain line or phrase or even a word might not be changed for a better one; I have often curled up and fallen asleep thinking of nothing better than whether a certain photograph would make a good block. In my more altruistic moments, I feel that two types of people ought not to marry. The first is racing drivers, the second is newspaper men. However, it is not to expound my views on newspaper men that I am writing this story. It is more to illustrate a point or rather an exception to a rule.

At the risk of repeating myself I will mention just once again that our particular breed tend to think of life as so many stories strung together. When you work on an assignment, you remain completely engrossed in it. I might add just in passing that there are few professions which offer such a high degree of professional satisfaction. However once your copy has gone to press, you wash your hands, as it were, of that particular assignment and move on to the next, beginning all over again from square one. You do not forget them yet as the link between successive events are often tenuous, in time they all become hazy memories. One hotel room is very much like another; then when you have seen so many cities they do not strike you as being all that different; the names of the people who took up so much of your attention at one time are quite likely forgotten; it is conceivable that you might remember just their faces. But once in a while something turns up that takes you back to one familiar territory. It is pointless pretending that I know any more of this particular story than I really do, but such facts as I have I shall endeavour to put down as accurately as possible so that the reader may judge for himself.

I was home on leave at the time determined to enjoy what I considered to be a month's well deserved rest. The previous months had been particularly hectic with a series of crises that seemed

have occurred all at the same time. Of course, a readjustment of European currencies was not unexpected but the Summit in New York came as a total surprise. Just when we had started deciphering the usual camouflaged language of the east-west negotiations came the South African crisis. And if all that was not enough, we had the sudden crop of German suicides, unconnected at first but whose implications when they emerged threatened to rock the very stability of the Nato countries. All in all we were kept working at a feverish pace trying to catch up with the latest developments. My headquarters were at London but I was sent back and forth across the Atlantic like a yoyo so that it was almost a relief to go to Germany to take a closer look at the antics of Herr Grunier and his crowd. In the heat of the moment, it had escaped everyone's notice that a particularly dangerous situation was developing on the middle-east front. It is here that my story is set. But perhaps I ought to relate the events in a more logical order.

One afternoon when the situation seemed to have quietened down a little, my editor sent for me and unceremoniously packed me off on a month's holiday. I protested at first, I said that I wanted to see everything through to the end but it was only a half-hearted appeal. Consequently I found myself on a jet, not on an assignment this time, but bound for a month's holiday at Calcutta.

I admit it was good to be home again. The thrill of being back saw me through the first couple of days. But then the rest of the week dragged on interminably. I had lost touch with the few people that I had known and I did not have the energy to track them down. I felt lost and I think I would have jumped at the slightest chance to return to my work again. It was as bad as that.

I was watching the rain from my window one afternoon. It was late August and from all accounts, it appeared to be the last flourish of the monsoons. I had been wondering all morning as to how I might occupy myself during the rest of the day. I was glad that the rain came and gave me an excuse to stay in. It was a long time since I had seen the magnificent lashing of the rain in the tropics. It was not just the rain but the fierce wind that made the rain dance about in a mad frenzy of delight. It splattered down on the pavement sending up a great shower of spray. Beyond the roofs of some of the houses, I caught a glimpse of palm leaves doing what could have been an African tribal dance. I watched the people on the road soaked to the skin and far too wet to care any more. You do not stand a chance against rain of this kind. It comes at you from all sides. One moment it comes at you from your left so you place your umbrella on that side. But the very next moment it switches round and comes to you from your right. I always thought that that was very tricky. So you might as well pack up your umbrella and give up. It was enormous fun watching the few persisting souls having their umbrellas blown inside out. Suddenly, I was seized by a mad idea. I dismissed it immediately but the very moment I thought of it I knew I would carry it out. I ran out into the street. The rain poured down my neck. It drenched my clothes. The water streamed down my hair. The mud from the path splashed in and covered me from top to bottom. It brought back vivid memories of rugby matches at school when we used to merge from the field in such a state that our own mothers would have found difficulty in recognizing us. Altogether, it was marvellous.

I must have walked a good deal for I found myself walking through the arcade in front of Howringhee. I watched the sahibs drift in and out of the Grand somewhat enviously for I had

momentarily forgotten that I too could afford to go in there now for a cup of tea. I was just about to side-step a man who was trying to sell me a large collection of Chinese pens when I thought I heard someone call my name.

There were several people who had come out of the Grand and though I ran my eye quickly over them, there was no one there I could recognize immediately. Yet I was sure that someone had called me. I was not mistaken for a young man came and shook me heartily by the hand.

"How fantastic to see you again!" he said still shaking me by the hand.

"Hello," I said, desperately trying to place him.

The fair skin showed despite the tan, the dark eyes had a knowing look, his light hair was ruffled like that of a school boy who has got into a fight. His clothes were informal, very informal in fact. The blue shirt flopped about outside his corduroy trousers. On his feet, he wore sandals. Here, I said to myself, was a man who had little or no respect for authority.

"I am surprised," he smiled at me, "that you managed to recognize me with my moustache. Mother thinks it is a positive horror."

I examined the moustache. I was not sure whether Omar Sharif had copied it from him or he had copied it from Omar Sharif. He ran his hand through his hair. It was that characteristic movement that brought it all back to me.

"John," I shouted, thumping him on the shoulders.

And so we greeted each other in characteristic manner for about ten minutes. We called each other a good many things. It is the sort of things you pick up at English schools. I should not like to repeat any of them here. Suffice it to say none of it was polite.

"What brings you here?" I asked John.

"There's an archeological conference going on in Delhi at the moment, so I thought I would nip down and take a look round Calcutta."

"That sounds about as good an excuse as any," I said smiling.

"Are you on an assignment here?" John asked me.

I shook my head.

"No, I am on holiday," I said with no great enthusiasm.

"By the way, I read your article on the Williamson affair. That wasn't so bad. But your effort on the German suicides—well, that was the greatest load of rubbish if you ask me. And they pay you to write stuff like that!"

I smiled. Young John had picked up something of his brother's nature.

"Won't you come in for a cup of tea?"

He changed his mind almost immediately.

"No, look it's stopped raining. Let's go for a walk, shall we? I must say you look a sight—reminds me of the time I used to watch you play football at school."

It hadn't stopped raining completely but the fine drizzle did not matter very much. We turned towards the river.

"I am glad I met you," John spoke again. "You see there has been something on my mind for quite some time now. How long ago was it that I saw you for the last time?"

"Six years," I volunteered at a rough guess.

"Seven and a half," John said doing a quick mental calculation. "I must say it doesn't seem that long," he said distractedly. "Anyway, nothing happened for a while after you left. Then six months later, I had a letter from David."

"What?"

I could hardly believe my ears.

"Well, that letter took a long time to get to me. You see I kept changing my address and the letter kept following me round. It's a surprise it ever got to me. All in all it took eighteen months to get to me from the time that it was written. In a way I wish I hadn't got it."

I didn't speak. I allowed John the time to rearrange the jumble of thoughts on his mind.

"I say, you haven't got a spare hour or two, have you?" he asked in that excessively apologetic voice that reminded me so much of his brother. His earnest face looked so anxious that I had to put out a hand and patted him on the shoulder.

"Well, I would like to show you David's letter. I have always carried it round with me. I don't know but you might be able to make something of it. I've got it in my room."

So we turned back and retraced our steps through the crowded Calcutta streets. Even the drizzle had stopped.

I was thinking back to the events of seven and a half years ago. As I said it is not very usual but once in a while something does happen which takes you back to once familiar territory. The scene had been Montreal.

The impending Canadian elections suddenly had assumed vast significance. The friction between the French speaking state of Quebec and the other English speaking states of Canada, like Toronto, had always been there; however, a few irresponsible statements by one or two European leaders had shifted the whole crisis onto an international level. Although public reports were watered down, it was secretly felt in newspaper circles in England, at least, that Canada tottered perilously on the brink of civil war. I knew that for me it would be either Canada or India where an interesting situation was developing after a political murder. I was always amused—and annoyed—that my editor steered me off Indian affairs. He said that I might not be able to exercise the same objectivity. My editor sent for me just as I was about to go home one evening. It was a few minutes after ten. I found him immersed in a sea of paper.

"It's Canada this time. You're booked on the 11 O'Clock Air Canada Flight tomorrow morning. You'll be working from Montreal. See what you can find. And remember," he said rather severely, "cut out the poetry this time."

I grinned and left.

I knew John Hastings was living in Montreal at the time. I sent him a cable asking him to meet me at the airport if he was free. I thought he might be able to help me with my work.

At school, John had been in the third form when I was in the upper sixth, so he was four years younger. It was his brother David whom I had known well. He was in my year, and I used to see him occasionally even after Cambridge. Of course, I had not seen David for a year or two. The last time we met at a party, I spoke to him for only a few minutes. He said something about going to the middle-east. There was nothing very unusual about that.

David Hastings came from a rich Jewish family. His grandparents on his mother's side had been refugees from Russia. David's parents had built up a flourishing clothing business in England. I suspect that David himself was something of a disappointment to his parents.

There was little about David that was essentially Jewish, except perhaps his money. Judging from his looks, the last thing that would have occurred to anyone was that he was Jewish. His fair complexion, his blonde hair, his dark eyes which looked particularly attractive against the back-

ground of his fair face gave him the sort of looks that have caused the ruin of many a woman. One might have been forgiven for thinking he was a Central European, yet when he spoke you knew that he was English. There was no getting past his public school, Oxbridge upper class accent. You could have placed him as a Midland's man from where the most beautiful people in England come, with their fine and delicate bone structure which persists even into old age. Yet David was Jewish.

I think he preferred to remain in the outer fringes of Jewish society. My circle of Jewish friends was not a small one but it had taken me rather a long time to get to know them. It had been worth it. The Jews tend to move in very well defined circles. The very nature of their religion, orthodox and inflexible, helped them to maintain their exclusiveness. The strong bond of sympathy and understanding between Jews had been responsible for their having survived the most systematic persecution that any race has ever had to face. It had given them a built-in resilience that nothing could destroy. That is why I felt at times that David himself had been a disappointment to his parents.

David was far too much of a restless character to be bound down by the strict codes of being an orthodox Jew. There was nothing exceptional about the fact that David did not stay home during the Sabbath. I found most of the younger set anyway were doing away with the outer manifestations of their religion. But there was an unwritten law and it pained David's parents that he not so much flouted this as he seemed completely oblivious of its presence. It was difficult to argue with David. When confronted by his parents, he willingly agreed to go to synagogue but they felt his heart was not there. He might just as well have gone round the corner to get a packet of cigarettes to oblige his parents.

You couldn't call David a rebel. He had far too much polish to be called that. There was nothing of the harshness or explosive quality you associate with a rebel. Yet I remembered that at school he had once thrown a whole bottle of ink at the headmaster just to prove that it could be done. He was a great favourite with the little boys. They hero worshipped him. Long after he left, they still talked of the goal he scored against Malborough off a direct corner kick. He would have made an excellent batsmen if only he had possessed a little more patience. He had a good eye for the ball but he wanted to knock every ball right out of the ground. The surprising thing is that often he managed to do just that. I remember once when he was given out, he expressed his disapproval by simply picking up the umpire and carrying him right out of the ground to be dumped in the bushes. But I had a brief glimpse of David's other side. Once he spent days nursing a wounded bird that he found, and remained heartbroken for days when the bird died. "That bird put all its trust in me and I let it die," he said remorsefully. Coming from him, I thought it was a peculiar remark for he loved nothing better than prowling round with his airgun. On many a free Saturday afternoon, we had gone fishing together, and David not only took his fishing rod with him but also his airgun. On the way, he took pot shots at all the birds that he could find. His young mind was fascinated by all the tiger stories I told him, about huge Royal Bengal tigers roaming wild in the jungle and how people came from all over to kill or be killed. I had never seen a tiger in my life—outside a zoo—I knew that and I knew that David knew that but to us it was an irrelevant detail. Yet it was characteristic of David that after the death of his bird, he never used his airgun again. There was something else about him that not many

people knew. He used to scribble odd lines of poetry on the back of his books. Of course, I could not tell how good his poems were but one or two of his lines would go round and round in my mind when I went to bed at night because I thought they sounded rather nice.

I was met at Dorval Airport, Montreal, by John. He had been living in Canada ever since he had left university. He was hoping to do an archeological survey of early settlements in Canada, though what he hoped to find only he knew. As I had not been to Canada before, I hoped John would be able to give me an idea of the political background against which the elections were being held.

I thought the two brothers were so similar in certain respects, yet so different in other ways. John had picked up something of his brother's frankness. Were it not for the charming manner in which they expressed their opinions, it would have amounted almost to tactlessness at times. This was a quality that John shared with his brother that whenever I asked him for his opinion, I was sure of getting his honest opinion. But there were differences.

John had a youthful maturity that made him more responsible in his attitude to life. By contrast to his brother, he seemed all the more responsible. In his attitude to religion, for instance, he was outwardly much influenced by David but as he grew up, he moved away from David and became an orthodox Jew. It must have been an enormous relief to his parents who would have been heartbroken had they lost both sons. But to me who saw both brothers grow up—in a sense, I grew up with them—there was one major point of difference. It was women.

David had all the ingredients that go to make up a playboy—handsome looks, money, the inclination and the time—and he used them to his full advantage. His first girl friend had been Jennifer, that had been when we were in the fourth form. The affair lasted six months, strangely enough his longest affair. At school, I think he was quite right not to get seriously involved with anyone. But even at a permissive place like Cambridge, he acquired the most notorious reputation for being a heart-breaker.

I was surprised women could be so gullible as to be taken in completely by him. One or two of the luckier ones had realized early on that David was incapable of going into a serious relationship and had beaten a hasty retreat. It remained a source of constant amazement to his friends that he turned up at each party with a different woman. He had an almost pathological fear of being trapped by women; so he flitted like a butterfly from flower to flower. He could not stay anywhere for long, and the more possessive a woman became the more claustrophobic he felt. That was one sure way of losing him. Of course half the girls who were drawn to David would have been drawn equally to someone else with his money. The others, though well meaning, made the fatal error of trying to change him. For he could not be moulded to fit the specifications of any woman. Beneath his polished exterior, he was very wild, and his wildness was all the more aggravated because it was hidden. I once asked him if he would ever marry.

"Yes, I think so," he said, "but it will have to be someone who will love me, not in spite of my faults, but because of them."

Whilst others marvelled at his technique with women, he seemed to me always to be a slightly magic figure; in spite of his youthful vitality, he had lost his faith in himself. I thought it would take an extraordinary woman to restore that faith, and he would get him.

After Cambridge, David and I drifted apart, David to his work—though no one knew for certain what that was—and I to my newspaper. It is true that we met each other occasionally but as time went by, those occasions became fewer and far between. The last recollection of him was at a party; he was with a beautiful girl—the type that supposedly infests London but somehow you never get to know. He also said something about going to the Middle-East by which, I suppose, he meant the Holy Land. It was a normal trip for most Jews to undertake at least once during their lifetime. I make a point of mentioning this because it has a special significance in what was to follow.

Though I was in Canada primarily to cover the elections, I looked forward eagerly to hearing about David again from his brother John.

On the way back from the airport, John was unusually quiet. He did not say anything as he drove me back to his flat. I dare say it was some time since we had last met, and it would take a while for conversation to flow freely again.

"Would you like to drive for a bit?" John asked me.

"No thanks," I laughed, "I can never get used to driving on the right side of the road."

I looked out of the car.

"I don't really see why they call Montreal the 'Paris of the New World!'" I said. "Apart from the fact everything here is written in French, there is nothing particularly Parisian about it. It looks the epitome of a flashy American city."

"You must admit Montreal has some character." John said, and I noticed he pronounced 'Montreal' slightly differently from me.

Was it just my imagination or did I notice a certain constraint between us? I tried to channel the conversation along more personal lines.

"How's David?" I asked in an off-hand manner. "I haven't seen the rascal for years. I suppose he is knocking about the world somewhere?"

"I don't think so," John said quietly.

I couldn't help it but the quick flash of his eyelashes again made me feel that an invisible barrier had fallen between us. I made no further attempt at conversation on the way.

John's flat was somehow outside Montreal. I should have loved such a flat so delightfully situated in ideal parkland. It was not so much a flat in the sense you think of the term; it was a house and John had the first floor. I was booked to stay at the Laurentian but John insisted I cancel my reservation and stay with him. He showed me to my room. Everywhere there were odd statues, replicas, jars, earthen pots, masks, sculptures to indicate John's profession. Were it not for the plush surroundings, it would have been like walking through a museum.

"I have to go out today," John explained. "I won't be back till the evening. I wonder if you will be able to amuse yourself till then?"

John soon left me to spend the day by myself or what was left of the day. I loved nothing better than to be able to wander about for a day all by myself in a new country. From the terraced balcony could be seen, through the gaps in the trees, the waters of the St. Lawrence river. I decided to go for a walk. Autumn, or fall as they call it in Canada, was well advanced on its way. The maple trees displayed a blaze of colour; I thought it would have been worthwhile travelling half-way across the world just to see that particular tint of gold. The fir trees are, of course, evergreen and though I could not distinguish their infinite varieties, I should have loved to have stayed on into the win-

ter and see their branches bowed down by their heavy burden of snow. It was possible to see the St. Lawrence river more clearly now. There was some traffic on the river, sailing boats, trawlers, fishing boats, in the distance I thought I saw the outline of some big ocean liner. They had to make the best possible use of the river during the few months of the year that it did not lie frozen solid with ice and snow. Strangely enough I thought of our own rivers in India, the Teesta, the Kosi and other rivers which burst their banks when the monsoons came and often washed whole villages away. It just occurred to me in passing that when the thaw came to the ice-bound St. Lawrence in spring, it could be equally dangerous.

John was late in returning home that evening. I had gone to bed but I heard him come in. He must have seen the light under my door for he knocked to see if I was up. He looked somewhat more relaxed than when he had left me earlier on in the day.

"I am sorry I haven't been a very good host," he began apologetically, "but I had to finalise details with a group of people I am going to excavate with in Mexico. You know I have always been fascinated by Aztec culture, well this is the first chance I will have of taking a look myself. It will mean sinking all my resources into this venture but I dare say I'll manage."

I sat up in bed pleased to have someone to speak to again. John walked to the window and peered through the curtains.

"Are you sleepy?" he asked me.

"No, no", I replied equally anxious to talk. "In fact I slept for most of the way on the plane."

"Excellent. I don't know whether you would care for a drink?"

Without waiting for my reply, he went and fetched a bottle of port and two glasses. I watched him set the glasses on the table carefully and fill them up to the brim. He walked over and handed me my glass.

"Port has a beautiful colour, has it not?" he said holding his glass upto the light. "By the way, I am sorry to have been so uncommunicative this afternoon. I have something to tell you about your friend and my brother David."

His tone puzzled me. I had never before heard him use that detached voice.

"It may surprise you to know that David was working for international espionage."

"What?" I cried, springing up in bed, quite unable to hide my surprise.

A faint flicker of a smile crossed John's face. "Yes, I don't mind admitting it surprised me as well when I found out. You know David travelled a lot. Well, none of us thought anything of it. He would come home suddenly without letting anyone know, and then disappear equally quickly with prior warning. Occasionally he brought home things for us and only that gave us an indication of where he had been. I saw David only from time to time for my own work kept me busy in Egypt for a while but there was no mistaking the gradual change that came over him, I mean a change for the better. There was nothing you could put your finger on. There was much more of the *joie de vivre* in him, the old restlessness seemed to be fading and was replaced by a kind of inner peace. Even father noticed it, and just when we thought he had come home for good, he would suddenly pack his bags and leave. His old nature would reassert itself. It broke mother's heart to see him go each time but I admire her for not showing her emotions. 'Oh, let him go', she would say, 'he is like the wind. Keep him locked up and he will die'. And so he maintained his itinerant existence, and we had to be

satisfied with what little we saw of him. Consequently, you can imagine it was no great surprise to me when David turned up here. The manner of his arrival however was unorthodox.

It was just over a year ago. It had been an ordinary sort of day. I came home one evening, opened the door and walked in.

'You have not even condescended to say good evening,' came a voice from the darkness.

I was taken aback even though I recognized David's voice. I switched on the light to find him reclining on the sofa.

'Oh, hello, how are you?' I said still quite not recovered.

'Very well, thank you,' he replied. 'I notice the Montreal air suits you. There is a distinct colour in your cheeks. By the way, old chap, I really must congratulate you on your collection of liquors. The cherry brandy is to be recommended particularly. Well, just don't stand there. If I were you I should instantly open that packet that I have so safely deposited on the side table. You will find some Mesopotamian crockery in there which, I am assured, will bring a gleam to the eye of any connoisseur.'

I walked over to the table and with trembling hands undid the parcel.

'David,' I cried with delight, 'this must be worth an untold sum. However did you manage to get it?' I said shaking him by the hand. 'What can I do to repay you?'

'If you could see your way to laying your hands on a leg of chicken—well done, of course—garnished with onions and topped up with a doubling helping of chips, not to mention half a bottle of Reisling—chilled, of course—I should consider myself adequately rewarded. For dessert, I should consider Rum Baba to be an admirable choice.'

A sudden thought had struck me.

'David', I asked, 'however did you get in?'

'Ah,' he said vaguely, 'it's one of the tricks I have learnt in my new profession'.

'You are not a burglar, are you?' I said laughing.

'No,' he said, 'I am working for American espionage'.

Still laughing, I looked at him. There was no returning smile in David's eyes. Watching him, I suddenly experienced a hollow, sinking feeling in the pit of my stomach. The smile on my face froze. I grabbed a chair and sat down. But he would not tell me anything till he had eaten.

After dinner that evening, we sat in the drawing room on either side of the fire. I put fresh logs in and stoked the fire for the night had grown much colder. David lit his cigar and leaning back in his chair, he smoked in silence for a while. At last he began. He spoke in a whisper; his voice was almost inaudible and I had to strain my ears, at first, to catch what he said.

'I met Suraiya Ismail about two years ago in London. It was a hot summer afternoon and I was just ambling through Trafalgar Square looking at the tourists feeding the pigeons. The afternoon sun was exceptionally hot and I was looking for a bit of shade in which to sit down for I was in no frantic hurry. It occurred to me that I might spend my time profitably in the British Museum which as you know is just across the road. Well, John, I cannot pretend that I understand paintings in the same way that you do, but I certainly know what I like. My taste in these things is, I am afraid, highly conventional and I made a quick dash for the Van Dykes and Rembrandts. However, I was too apathetic to proceed further and it was with a happy sigh that

I deposited myself in the seat opposite the huge painting of Charles I on horseback by Van Dyke. It was at this point that I became aware of another person sitting next to me who took the same interest in that particular painting. As you well know, I never speak to strange women without being introduced first but on this occasion, I had not the slightest compunction in breaking this rule.

"Nice horse", I said.

"Very", she whispered lifting her chin up slightly.

Having established the point that it was a nice horse, a very nice horse in fact, I wondered whether it would be injudicious to impress her with my knowledge of art.

"Van Dyke paints well, don't you think?"

"Definitely a departure from surrealism if that is what you are trying to say. The brown injects a certain lyrical quality, you must admit, which lends to the whole effort a transcendental atmosphere."

"Precisely".

"However, I must make a determined effort not to branch off into metaphysics".

"Exactly what I was going to say".

"The exceptional impact that impressionism made on me made me wonder whether it would not be worthwhile turning the time machine back and living my whole life again through the eyes of Renoir or Manet".

"You are very beautiful".

My comment produced a quick smile.

"Golly," she said, "you musn't say things like that".

It's strange you know but she hadn't even looked at me. Yet she spoke as though we knew each other. It gave you the feeling that somewhere, long ago, you had already met. She never raised her voice once above that whisper, and I wondered whether she had ever raised her voice in her whole life. She held her head with the poise of a woman who knows she is beautiful. She was quite aware of the fact that I was watching her and didn't seem to mind at all. There was a quality about her face that I found irresistible, perhaps that hint of sadness that is essential to the highest beauty. She was not English though you would not have been able to tell that from hearing her speak. She wore a checked woollen skirt, rich dark in colour, which contrasted well with the delicate pink of her frilly blouse. Her pale flawless complexion reflected the pink of her blouse. She had her hair up, revealing a smooth, warm neck. Don't ask me how I knew it was warm. Call it instinct if you like. I noticed she had one characteristic gesture. From time to time, she would lick the top of her lips. You realized she used lipstick but it was no more than a touch of light orange on her lips. She sat very still in a formal attitude, yet she looked tranquil and calm.

"Why are you so beautiful?" I heard myself say.

It was not such an irrelevant question. I have known a few women in my time, but what I could not understand was how it was possible for anyone to look like her. Her regal poise cracked a little as her smile revealed the dimples in her cheek. She did not reply, only shook her head gently.

"After all", I said quietly, "you must have got used to people telling you that".

"Oh, dear," she laughed, "what makes you think that?"

It was an exquisite laugh; it was like coming suddenly upon a hidden brook in the Swiss forests.

"Who are you?" I asked her.

"I am Suraiya Ismail".

"David Hastings".

It seemed only peculiar that we should not already have known that.

"Will I see you again?" I asked.

"I have a feeling that we will".

"Tonight?"

"Golly, you are quick".

"Don't you understand?"

"Yes, but I am going home tonight".

"Home?" I asked, a little surprised.

"Yes," and I am pleased to say that she said it almost sadly, "I am going home to Jordan by an evening flight. My father is here with a delegation and I could not miss the chance of coming to England with him".

I remembered reading something in the papers about a Jordanian delegation being in England at the time to negotiate an arms deal. Though Britain had identified herself more with the Israeli cause, she was being forced to reconsider her position under the threat of an oil embargo from the Arab countries.

"Will I have to follow you to Jordan then?" I asked.

"Yes, I think so but it might be better if you don't," she said simply.

"Why do you say that?"

"Because I can foresee the future perhaps better than you can," she replied.

"How do you mean?" I asked.

"Well, I am Muslim and you are not, are you?"

"No, I am not, "I admitted, "I am Jewish".

"Are you?" She seemed a little surprised. "Well, that makes it even more difficult. I doubt if they will even let you enter Amman."

"Oh, is that where you live?" I asked.

"Yes, I have lived there all my life. I was born there."

"How old are you?" I asked again.

"Twenty three."

"I thought so, though when you smile you look seventeen."

"Do I?" she asked with a wide-eyed look.

"Yes, you do. You know if you have lived all your life in Amman, you would find it very difficult to leave the place. You will have to marry a local man, you know. No one could take you away."

"I don't think so. It's true I have grown up in Amman but I could leave if I wanted to."

"Would it surprise you very much if I told you I have fallen in love with you?"

She thought for a minute before replying.

"No, it wouldn't."

"You know I can't live without you now," I said rather impulsively.

"That's a very silly thing to say," she said very quickly. "It's too quick. I don't even know you and yet,"—she paused for a while—"I do."

She left England for Jordan that night. On my way home that evening, I stopped to buy a copy of the *Evening Standard*. I found what I was looking for. It was a brief report but it said that His Excellency, Syed Salim Ismail, Ambassador from the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, was flying back to Jordan later in the evening after 'fairly fruitful talks' with the British Government.

The days turned to weeks and the weeks to months. Summer came and went and autumn had already set in. I wondered whether Suraiya had been an apparition, she had come and gone out of my life so quickly. Then one day, something happened that touched off a chain of events I could hardly have foreseen at the time.

One morning I had a letter in answer to my advertisement offering my services as a free lance photographer. The letter was from an agency—and it appeared to be a fairly good one from the quality of paper that it used—and it said that they had made enquiries concerning my previous work. Having satisfied themselves, they wanted to know whether,

their offer of a commission to take photographs in the middle-east would be acceptable to me. Of course, they were kind enough to point out that taking photographs in the middle-east was not an easy profession at the best of times; under the present circumstances, it was an excessively hazardous assignment. They could only compensate for the dangers by paying a very handsome price. Would I let them know at my earliest convenience if I was interested? Needless to say, I accepted the job by return of post. I did not realise that I was walking headlong into an international spying network. I convinced myself that I was accepting the job because it promised to be interesting. At the back of my mind was the longing, for so long repressed, to see Suraiya again. I had never met anyone like her.

Anyway, it was settled. I should take photographs for an encyclopedia—for that happened to be the official explanation at the time—and I would be working from Tel Aviv in Israel. I was not one to delay, and a week later I found myself contacting the firm's agents in Israel. Everything appeared to be bona fide, at least to my unsuspecting eyes, though there are certain things that I can only explain now. For instance they suggested that I change my Hasselblad for a smaller camera, and they went out of their way to equip me with telephoto and infra-red lenses, the latter making it possible to take photographs in the dark. At the time, I was impressed with the firm which equipped its photographers so well. For two weeks, I wandered about Israel taking pictures of dogs, cats, people, buildings, hospitals so that it was a relief to be given a specific job. I was asked to take photographs of Jerusalem. The place has great historic value and they said it would be a pity if only half of it—that is the half on the Israeli side—was photographed. But of course it was too much to expect me to go over to the Jordanian side to take photographs of the other half. Risking my neck had certainly not been part of their bargain. It was far too dangerous. At the hint of danger, I pricked my ears, I asked for more details. Reluctantly they supplied them. Looking back on it now, I have certainly got to hand it to their P.R.O. chaps. They certainly knew how to robe me in:

Well, you know I have a photographic memory for things. For a whole week, I pored over maps of Jerusalem, so that by the time I finished I could recognize almost every single stone in the place. My camera was changed for an even smaller micro-camera. The telephoto and infra-red lenses, I already had.

On a dark moonless night, I slipped out over the border. The border is, of course, heavily guarded but if you know what you are doing, it is not impossible to escape the long range of those high-powered rifles. Once in Jordan, I mingled in with the tourists and became one of them.

I don't know whether you've ever been to Jerusalem, John, but it evoked strange feelings even within me. The place cannot have changed much in two thousand years. From under the shade of a tree, I watched the mid-day sun light up the holiest of all holy cities, this meeting place of three religions. The wall still runs round the old city of Jerusalem; from the wall sloping down is a sort of valley which serves as a graveyard. When the afternoon sun shines, the thing that dominates the city of Jerusalem is a massive golden dome that you can see over the top of the wall. I entered the city through the Damascus Gate, which is one of the six gates. Inside you find the same damp, dark walls, the narrow lanes, the inhabitants, all dressed in flowing white, walking silently past with their earthen jars, the women folk hurrying through with veils drawn across their faces.

My first visit to Jérusalem passed off uneventfully enough. I returned without detection. It was on the second trip that the plans I had begun to take shape. From Jérusalem to Amman is not a long drive but it takes you through an exhilarating panorama of views. The road to Amman goes high up through the hills, and it looks down on the river Jordan winding its way through the soft folds in the hills. After the harshness of the desert with its dusty white sands everywhere that you look, the patch of green brings back memories of the Promised Land.

Well, I did get to Amman that evening. My problem was to find Suraiya without being too conspicuous. Fortunately, her father is well known but I doubt if he would have taken kindly to a stranger asking to see his daughter. I found the house in a respectable quarter of the city, a sprawling one storied house surrounded by a wall, and infested by guards. From inside came the smell of roses.

I won't go into all the details of how I managed to get word through to Suraiya. I will only say that it was not easy but in the end I did get someone to deliver a note personally into her hands. You cannot imagine how happy I was when she came. Of course, it was not possible for us to meet in public, or rather it was not possible for her to meet me in public. I waited for her at a deserted mosque outside Amman. When she came two things occurred to me. The first that she was not late. The second was that I wondered if I was playing a game.

Even though she wore a flowing black dress and a veil hid her face, you could have sensed she was a beautiful woman merely from her poise and gait. She picked up her dress with one hand and carefully stepping in between the stones and the weeds, she came and stood in front of me. It amazed me that anyone should trust me like this. I put out a hand and gently lifted her veil.

What does one say at a moment like this? For the life of me, I couldn't think of anything. The interesting thing is that I did not even find it necessary to speak. I don't think she did either. I led her by the hand and made her sit down on the edge of the marble floor.

"Suraiya," I said, and my voice sounded quite unlike my own, "why am I so nervous?"

"I am as well," she said simply.

"Suraiya, this is mad," I said.

"I know." Then she smiled at me. "Why are you looking at me like that for?"

"You know I could look at you all my life."

She broke into a soft chuckle.

"Oh dear, you are off again."

"I mean it," and I found my matter of fact voice becoming not so matter of fact.

"How do you know—I mean how can you be so sure?"

"I could sit here and look at your face for hours on end. It would make me very happy".

"You might get tired of it."

"Never!"

"I might be quite horrible really," she pointed out.

"Really?" I said much amused.

"After all, you know so little about me."

"When will I see you again?" I asked as she got up to go.

"It's better to meet like this," she told me.

"You mean you'll come and leave just like that?" I asked incredulously.

"What else can I do?"

At the time I could not understand why it was necessary for me to meet her like a thief in secret far from all other human eyes. Naturally, it was an effort for me to swallow my pride because I regarded the necessity to meet her secret to be a humiliating

reflection on myself. Later I learnt the truth from bitter experience. When I finally understood, I realized how much courage Suraiya had shown in seeing me.

For the first time in my life, I began to see what hate really meant. This was naked, undisguised hate I could not believe two religions could hate each other so much. It was horrible, it was grotesque. It distorted the souls of otherwise normal human beings. There was no logic behind the hate; it was part of their mental make-up. It went back through many centuries so that now it could not be erased from their blood. I would not mind admitting that it frightened me. It was not pleasant considering what would have happened if it were to be discovered that Suraiya had seen me and that too in secret.

The very next day I slipped out through the border and was back in Tel Aviv again. This time they came straight to the point. Would I spy for them? I said yes. It's funny really what you do for a woman. It seemed the only way of seeing Suraiya again. Besides I thought it might be quite good fun spying. I am afraid this recklessness has always been my undoing. However if I was to spy I thought I might as well do it properly. But I should point out that I would just as easily have spied for the Arabs had they paid me. To me it was merely an exciting game. There was admittedly one moment of hesitation when they said, "If you are successful do not expect any public recognition. If you are unsuccessful, we will see that you do not get any public recognition."

However, I did wonder whether it would not be selfish of me to involve Suraiya in all this for the sake of my pleasure. I told myself that, at any rate, I could use her as a useful contact.

My trips across the border became a regular affair. I was pleased to note that I was gifted with an inherent instinct for spying. Several times I thought I had been spotted slipping out through the Jordanian side but each time luck was on my side. However tight the security precautions, I always managed to penetrate factories, ammunition dumps, military installations and when I took my reports and my photographs back to headquarters, they were considered adequate.

You know you remember places mainly through certain associations I shall not remember Jerusalem because of its golden dome, or its Damascus Gate, or its old wall, or its Mount of Olives. I shall remember it because of Suraiya.

I could never get over the fact that she could trust me enough to come to Jerusalem alone to see me. As I got to know her better, it was like getting to know myself better—I saw so much of myself reflected in her. Yet I do not think I loved her as a woman, I worshipped her more as a Goddess. She had a certain reserve of personality that I greatly respected. It's odd that I should have consciously respected a woman. We did not even touch each other for months even though we spent a great deal of our time together. I somehow could never bring myself to do that. Yet when she kissed me for the first time, it seemed the most natural thing in the world. It was like all the other kisses put into one and more. There still remained a certain formality of expression between us so that she always remained new to me. I felt a great tenderness for her because I thought she was essentially very lonely. When I told her that, she rolled her eyes at me.

"Golly, what makes you think that?"

"Aren't you?" I asked. "You could spend hours by yourself".

"I think that we understand each other very well", was all she said.

Certain things worried her. Our religious difference for instance. It took me hours to convince her

of the universalism of religions and I was glad to see that slowly she began to see my point of view. She never shared my nonchalance or my healthy disregard for public opinion. She was far too sensitive for that. She cared for what other people thought and it caused her pangs to flout the conventions of society. She seemed eternally perturbed by the fact that our friendship would prove unfair to too many people. But occasionally she became very childlike and asked me rather peculiar questions.

"You are leading me astray, aren't you?"

or

"Stop me if you have heard this before but have you made love to a lot of other girls?"

Once she told me she was very perceptive.

"It's true," she said, lifting her chin up slightly, "I can see through people".

She certainly saw through me for she would often ask, "Why are you so wicked?"

I would retaliate by asking, "Why are you so beautiful?" and leave it at that.

I am sorry to have to admit that Suraiya turned out to be very useful as far as my own work was concerned. She was well connected, her father being Minister of the Interior. At headquarters they seemed surprised that I could supply them with information regarding the political set-up, who were the people making the decisions and the people in line for promotion. Suraiya's father confided freely in his daughter and I got everything I needed out of Suraiya. She herself never had an inkling of what I was upto. It was inevitable that there was soon going to be a full scale conflagration but months before it came, American espionage supplied meticulous detail of Arab military manoeuvres, thanks to people like myself.

With the other girls I have known, I somehow could not see the relationship continuing beyond a certain point. As far as Suraiya was concerned, I willed myself into not thinking about the future. She had seeped into my soul. She was now part of me. But for once I did not ask myself what Suraiya could give me. Instead I asked what I could give Suraiya. The answer was very little.

"Suraiya", I told her once, "you have given me more happiness in these few months than I have ever known".

"Don't be so melodramatic," she said in reply.

"Do you know," I said, "I have never told anyone else that I loved her."

Suraiya smiled and said, "Do you say that to every girl?"

"If I died tomorrow, it would be without any sense of regret."

"Honestly, you are so morbid," she scolded me. Then looking at my face she said, "Really, you mustn't be so intense."

But I wondered whether she really minded.

I used to meet Suraiya at her friend's house in Jerusalem. One afternoon while I was waiting for her, she rushed in and without a word bolted the door. She stood with her back to the door breathing heavily. I could see something was very wrong.

"Suraiya," I said, making her sit down on a chair, "what's happened?"

Poor girl, her hands were trembling.

"You've been running?"

"David, I've been followed. I am sure of that. It's not the first time either. I didn't want to tell you. You would think it was just my imagination, I thought so in the beginning as well but I am almost sure now that I am being followed between here and Amman."

It took a while to understand what she was saying. Her incoherent, unconnected sentences made no sense at all.

"Who followed you?" I asked.

"Men."

I patted her on the hand.

"Yes, yes, but what kind of men? Would you recognize them if you saw them again?"

"I don't know. I never actually saw their faces but it was the odd glance here and there. You must believe me, David, when I say that I have been followed. It's been happening for three weeks now. If my father discovers that I have been coming to see . . ."

"A Jew!" I finished off the sentence for her.

"It's not socially acceptable, don't you understand?"

It was something of an understatement.

"You know it goes against my grains to have to conform," I said quietly.

"And mine," she said softly.

I had always thought love was wild and reckless, that it never took into consideration the incompatibility of backgrounds. To be realistic was to be afraid. What was Suraiya afraid of?

"I don't want love to come in a flourish," she had once said.

Well, one could never help that. Love always came with a flourish. I think she was afraid that my passion for her was so intense that it might not be sustained. She needed a lot of affection, but perhaps she did not realize I needed her much more than she needed me.

Suraiya's fears that she was being trailed proved to be amply justified. But we did not find that out till later. That night we left through the back entrance, over a wall and out through a field. I watched Suraiya's figure disappear into the crowds of Jerusalem.

It was becoming increasingly difficult to cross the border. During the day, it was, of course, impossible, and at night, the situation was little better. At three points along the border, armoured patrols had exchanged fire. It was no more than a minor incident but it was assumed in most circles now that war was inevitable. Hence the patrols on the border had been increased.

Several hours after Suraiya had left, I suddenly jumped up from bed and decided to follow her back to Amman. I decided to catch up with her and tell her that I would not see her again. Of course with the exit of Suraiya from the scene, my source of half the information that I got would dry up but that couldn't be helped. I wondered what Suraiya would think of it but I was determined to carry out this decision, even though I knew it would destroy me.

Well, I never did catch up with Suraiya. Half way to Amman, I noticed that I was being trailed by a Jeep. However fast I drove the jeep would not be shaken off. Then at a certain corner in the road —you know how the road goes through very rough country—I was ambushed. It is not difficult for men to hide behind those big boulders scattered by the roadside. I did not wait to find out what was happening. I did a quick reverse and hightailed it back to Jerusalem. I suppose it was the one thing they had not expected me to do—that I should come back and go past them to return to Jerusalem.

There was only one possible explanation to the whole thing. Somehow, my cover had been blown. But I was damned if I was going to fall into Jordanian hands. At Tel Aviv, I made a bee-line for the airport and here I am. I think it is better if I do not see Suraiya again."

This was the story which David Hastings told his brother, John.

"Well, did he see Suraiya again?" I (the writer) asked. John seemed lost in thought for a moment before he replied.

"Yes, David did see his Suraiya again. He knew

he would not be able to keep away for long. He left as suddenly as he had come. I came home one evening to find the house empty. There was a little note for me which said,

'Forgive my rather hasty departure but I was never one for making plans in advance.'

"What happened after that?"

"I left all my work and followed David to the Middle-East. This is the story that I picked up from various sources. You see David met Suraiya again in Jerusalem. One does not know for certain what David said to her but she must have realized how much he loved her. But when they were leaving that night, David and Suraiya were confronted by soldiers. I am glad to say that Suraiya managed to escape—God knows how. I suppose David somehow managed to attract sufficient attention to give Suraiya enough time to get away. There was only one thing wrong with David's earlier speculation. These men weren't Jordanian soldiers at all, they were Israeli agents. The most damning thing from David's point of view was that some of his papers were found in Suraiya's possession. I suppose she had inadvertently picked up his papers on her way out of the house, and these papers had been snatched off from her hands in the struggle. Anyway, aided by David, she escaped."

John refilled both our glasses before continuing further.

"David, however, was not so lucky. He was taken back to Israel."

"I suppose they let him go when they discovered their mistake?"

John took a long time before replying. He shook his head.

"David was executed at dawn the next morning." I couldn't say anything but a cold shiver passed down my spine.

"The most damning evidence against him were the papers snatched from Suraiya's hands. It appeared that they had been studying David's movements for quite some time. They concluded that he was a double agent who had been passing information to Suraiya. David was given a summary trial and sentenced. He did not even live to see the sunrise. At dawn he was executed by a firing squad. But I think those last few months with Suraiya had given him more happiness than he had ever known. As he himself told me, he loved her more as a Goddess than a woman. That kind of happiness, it is a rare thing. I don't think it is given to many men to be able to love a woman in the way that David loved his Suraiya. All I can say is that he must have died without a sense of regret."

It will now be relatively easy to understand my great astonishment when I heard that John had received a letter from David six months after I had left him in Montreal. I had myself been sent out to the Middle-East when war broke out. I did a story on David that came to be known in the popular press as the 'Hastings Affairs'. That I thought had been the end of this story. All this had happened seven and a half years ago. It would be wrong to say that I had stopped thinking altogether about David but as the years went by, his memory slipped to a relatively passive corner of my mind. Seeing John in Calcutta had evoked those latent emotions.

Back at his hotel, John opened his suitcase and rummaging through a whole bundle of paper, he found what he was looking for. He handed over a letter to me.

The envelope was almost falling to bits; it bore the marks of having travelled through several lands.

From Canada, the letter had followed John round the continent and had finally tracked him down in London. It certainly was amazing that it ever did get to him. The original postmark was in Israel.

I opened the envelope and took out a sheet of paper. That too was nearly in shreds with the letter nearly coming apart at the many creases. I placed the letter carefully on the table and smoothed out the edges. Even after all these years, I recognised David's handwriting. After all at school he used to sit next to me and doodle in my books. I read the letter carefully.

'Dear John,

I am enabled to write this letter by the kind courtesy of these gentleman who await my pleasure. I shall be grateful if you will find Suraiya and deliver the attached letter into her hands. This I beseech you to do.

As for what is to follow, I only hope that you and Mother and Father will find it in your hearts to forgive me. As I have had cause to remark to you on several occasions before, whatever will be will be.

Believe me to be your very affectionate brother,

David'

When I had finished reading the letter, John handed me another piece of paper.

Here is the letter to Suraiya," he said, handing it to me. "Of course, I looked for her. I dropped everything and I searched Jordan, Israel, Syria, nearly the whole of the Middle-East for her. But she and her family had disappeared without trace. People in Amman shook their heads at the mystery of the family that had disappeared overnight and was never heard of again. I tried a second time but as before I failed to find Suraiya. Finally, I had to accept the fact that David's last wish would not be carried out. In a way that made me very glad. How could I have possibly given such a cruel letter to her? Just read it for yourself."

I read the letter written to Suraiya.

'Dear Suraiya,

It is in fairness to you that I write this letter. It is not my wish that you should for the rest of your life carry false illusions about me. It will probably hurt you to know that I

was a double agent working both for the Israelis and Jordanians, and as such I found you useful to my work. I pay the price that any spy who has been caught has to pay. It is nothing more than that.

I hope that you will be able to forget me and lead a new life in a new country far from our petty hates and prejudices.

David Hastings, Esq.

"So you see," John burst out, "once a playboy, always a playboy. And he convinced me it was otherwise. I don't see why he had to let Suraiya know that he had all along been using her. Why couldn't he let her rest in her own false world?"

I read the letter again carefully. Then I walked across to the window and opened it. The cool air came in with a rush. The noises from the street seemed to be just a distant echo.

"My dear John", I said quietly, "though there are many unanswered questions, still I think you do your brother an injustice."

He came and stood next to me.

"I don't think I understand you."

"There is more than one interpretation to this letter. Tell me, John, if you really loved someone, would you want her to grieve for you? David did not want to hang like a shadow over Suraiya for the rest of her life. Don't forget that it was because of her that he was caught. It was in trying to help Suraiya to escape that David himself could not get away. That realization might have hung heavy on her conscience. David wanted her to be happy above all. That is why I think he wrote that letter to destroy his own image. I can only guess what pain it must have caused him. A very rare kind of loving this, John. You were right about what you once told me so many years ago. I do not think it will be given to you or me or, for that matter, most other men to love a woman with the same purity of soul that David loved his Suraiya."

John had his face averted but I could see there was a strange moisture in his eyes.

"David was always funny, don't you think?" he said in a halting voice.

"Very," I said, pouring him out an extra-large cup of tea.



Turning the other cheek: Gandhiji's way



AMIT ROY

SURATHI RAY



PART from some minor border attacks and stray raids, India had to repel two major aggressions from two of her closest neighbours in the post independence period. Armed invasions had to be met with arms. A pertinent question, which, therefore, agitates responsible minds now, is if non-violence as a political weapon to meet aggression, which Mahatma Gandhi so devotedly endeavoured throughout his life to propound and establish, is a worn-out or impractical policy, particularly when further aggression has become a practical possibility.

In the last war when the Japanese were almost knocking at the eastern gates of India, Gandhiji fighting the British at that time, felt embarrassed as regards his own course of action. The Japanese were said to be coming as India's friends and as

enemies of the British in India. Should we, therefore, welcome them or take up arms against them? He decided to do neither. He chose to oppose them in a non-violent way. But was it a practical proposition? Could such resistance be effective in checking the onrush of the determined body of aggressors? Could it stop the transference of the occupation of the country from the "enemy we know to the enemy we do not know"—to quote Mahatma's own words?

But non-violence or *ahimsa* is nothing new to India. Rather, it is as old as the Indian civilisation itself.

In spite of the Rama-Ravana and the Kurukshetra wars, the Epics nowhere give their verdict in favour of initial armed aggression. Vibhishana and Hanumana tried all manner of means to prevent the Lanka war and pictured before King Ravana the devastation and misery the war might cause to his

country and race. Sri Krishna, Bhism, Vidura and many other farsighted statesmen also applied all their wisdom to restrain Duryodhana from embarking upon the revengeful war. The Mahabharata is full of such instances where lavish praise has been heaped on the virtue of *ahimsa*.

Buddha and Mahavira both laid stress on the practice of *ahimsa* as an absolute creed. Both emphasized that life that cannot be given must not be taken. Both the Prophets adopted compassion and *ahimsa* as a means of attaining individual perfection. Jesus Christ lived the doctrine of love and sacrifice which also meant the same thing—*ahimsa*.

Thus it is seen that in this land of *ahimsa*, the land of Buddha, Mahavira and Chaitanya, where non-violence has struck deep roots, Mahatmaji only revived the cult and raised it to a creed for life as well as polities. It has been made dynamic for individual perfection as well as for the realisation of political objectives. It is sought to be used as a weapon of both offence and defence.

Mahatmaji, fought the British in India by non-violent means. After attainment of freedom, responsible opinions currently assert that it was Mahatmaji's non-violent war that wrested freedom from the armed-to-teeth power. But this is rather an atrophied view of the whole story. The verdict of unbiased history is different.

The British had to withdraw from India by the force of circumstances created by the last global war. Freedom came to India as a result of interplay of various forces working within the country and without that compelled the occupying power to concede and compromise as a master stroke of Britain's traditional policy of self-preservation. Still, Mahatmaji's non-violence indeed made a major contribution to the fight to end the alien rule in that it sped up the advent of freedom.

After achieving independence, however, Gandhiji had to amend his position as a non-violent fighter under the force of circumstances. He could not adhere to absolute non-violence in its application as a weapon against armed aggression. During the tribal raid on Kashmir under Pakistan's incitement Mahatmaji gave his consent to the use of the Indian army in beating back the raiders. As a matter of fact, Gandhiji was ever awake to the needs of the State. In politics, he was thus a realist, a pragmatist. The same realism and pragmatism should assert itself whenever the situation demands it.

Mahatmaji's political heir and successor, Jawaharlal Nehru, was also a hard realist. He was also a non-violent fighter. The *ahimsa* of Lord Buddha was the inner spring of action in his life and politics. Yet, he never hesitated to send India's armed forces to Hyderabad or to quell rebellions in parts of the country, not to speak of Chinese invasion. In him we find realism and idealism combined.

Jawaharlal's successor, late Lal Bahadur Shastri also foed the line of his predecessor. A simple, austere man, who scrupulously practised non-violence in even day-to-day life, Shastriji also did not waste time to send Indian troops to the borders to meet Pakistan's armed aggression with arms. He, too, was a realist.

Does it then mean that non-violence has failed the test of reality? No. Non-violence as a political philosophy has its permanent value in that it may ultimately end war. As a philosophy of life it may

capture the mind of increasing members of statesmen of the world on whose decisions depends war or no war in settling international conflicts.

Admiral Chester Nimitz, U.S. Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Fleet during the last war, latterly Kashmir Plebiscite Administrator in the service of the UNO, once visited the office of President Gregg Sinclair of Hawaii University. He found an autographed photo of Mahatma Gandhi hanging on the wall of the office. Nimitz took off his hat, bowed before the great portrait and wished the world had only followed Gandhiji to end all wars for ever. The news was flashed across the air, for a great war leader bowing before the modern apostle of non-violence was surely something extraordinary. This event had in it the potentiality of the great idea of non-violence conquering the world.

As far as history records, it was Ashoka who was perhaps the world's first monarch to adopt *ahimsa* as the State policy in both internal and external affairs. A certain section of the students of Indian history, who feel very sad over the long periods of India's subjection to foreign invaders, blame Ashoka for this tragedy of uninterrupted slavery. According to them, Ashoka's mass preaching of *ahimsa*, coupled with the enervating influence of the country's climate, emasculated the people for generations and robbed them of the very spirit of resistance to aggression and ultimately paved the way to slavery and foreign domination. This comment on Asoka's State policy cannot be brushed aside without a moment's thought on it.

Mahatma Gandhi seems to have realised this danger. So, he says that his non-violence is the non-violence of the strong, not of the timorous masses. A weak man may live according to his *swadharma*, own nature, and resist aggression by violence. But an ideally strong man must resist aggression without violence on his part and die, if need be, in the act, even if turning of the left cheek may not stop slapping on the right cheek.

But the novelty of the creed lies in its new application inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi. He has given it a new colour and a new shape to render it as a source of strength instead of weakness. His technique of Satyagraha is really a test of supreme moral strength and endurance.

But strange and paradoxical as it appears, India has accepted Buddha but rejected Buddhism from practical life, just as Europe has accepted Christ but rejected the soul of Christianity in practice. Indians bow before Buddha as an *Avatar*, incarnation of God, but no longer practise the doctrine of universal love and *ahimsa*. Europe, too, pays homage to Christ with the offerings of cannon fodder.

Tolstoy propounded the doctrine of 'passive resistance', which is the seedling of Christ's doctrine of "resist no evil". This resistance with an attitude of non-resistance is indeed paradoxical. India accepted this doctrine of passive resistance of which the modern trade union strikes and unarmed mass resistance in the industrial fields are some applied forms.

"Resist no evil" carries with it a stronger form of resistance to the evil from within. It means no acquiescence in the Satan doing the mischief. It signifies only absence of outward physical resistance

or a violent physical struggle to overpower the Evil's operations. Outward non-resistance is a form of stronger inner resistance based on a will to win and conquer.

The Evil is ever present in man. It is the *Asura*, representing the Forces of Darkness, who seeks to supplant the Divine in man. So the Evil advances, the Divine withdraws and waits for the vantage moment to strike the final blow to vanquish the enemy. The method of non-resistance thus allows the enemy progressively to advance and exhaust itself. It is a successful method of warfare in the individual's inner struggle for perfection for spiritual success. Thus did Lord Buddha conquer the Evil.

But non-violence has its own weakness also. The 1942 revolt started as a non-violent struggle, but it could be easily provoked into outbursts of violence on the people's side in order to crush the movement by greater violence. The bludgeons, bayonets and bullets were all used to kill it. The 1921 movement was marred by the non-violent fighters' sudden outburst of violence at Chouri-Choura.

But yet non-violence has its potentiality in settling international conflicts in that a time may come when the statesmen of the world who have to handle weapons of mass killing and large scale devastations may rally round Gandhiji's ways. It has its potential effectiveness as a remote possibility for the future of mankind.

Non-violence is only a means to an end, and not an end in itself. We must not allow our country to be enslaved again or ourselves to be killed for the sake of non-violence. We must not adopt non-violence as an absolute creed or as a philosophy of life. This philosophy lived as an absolute creed will

only emasculate the nation. The Hindus who draw inspiration from the *Geeta* and the *Chandi* cannot accept the cult of *ahimsa* as an absolute principle of life, nor can they use it as an immutable tool of offence and defence should at any time their life, liberty and the freedom of the motherland be at stake. The nation should adopt non-violence as a policy, as a political expediency only, not as a creed or religion.

Though Soul Force or non-violence should be kept before the nation's eyes as an ideal to check the uncontrolled use of violence, the nation's supreme concern should, at the same time, be to fight for the cause of righteousness, if possible, by non-violent means. If that fails, the nation should not hesitate to take resort to violent means.

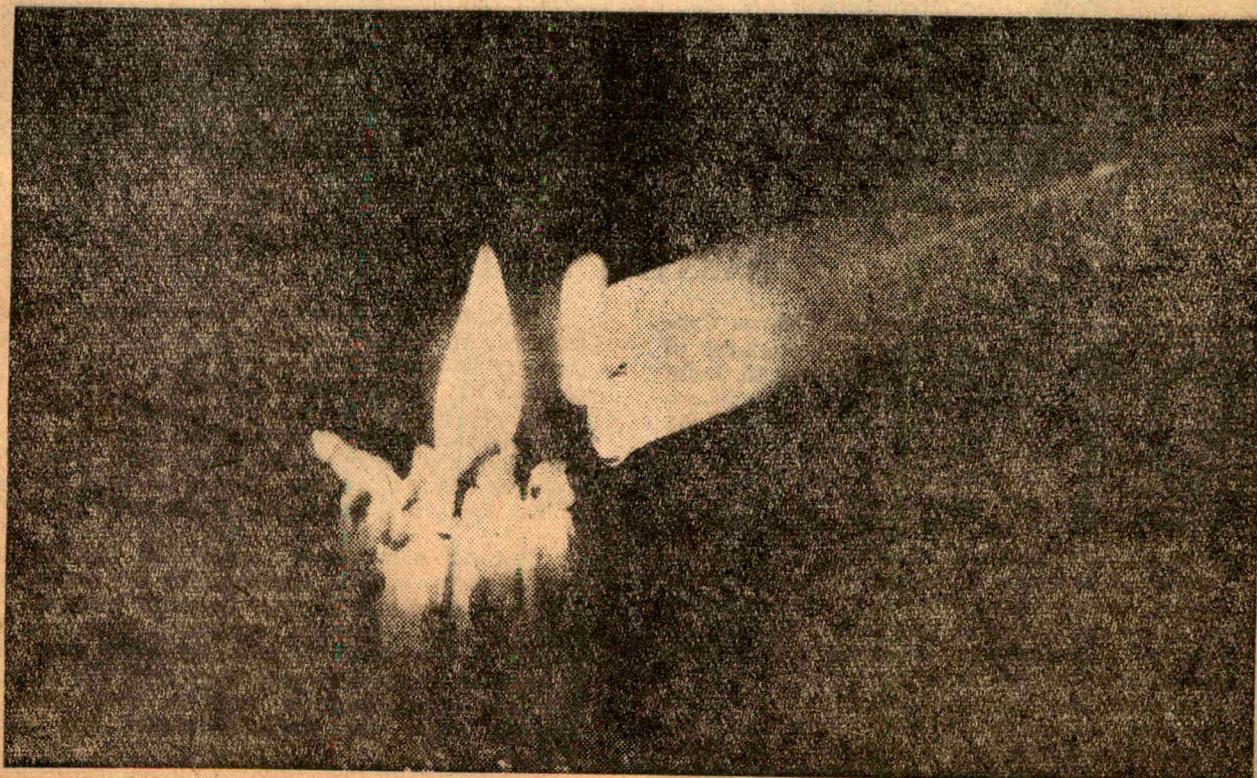
The qualms on the question of killing and non-killing should not attenuate the grimness of the patriotic soldier's determination to fight to achieve the objective of the fighting. Such qualms engender weakness in the fighter's mind. Sri Krishna had to curb such sentimental weakness of Arjuna in the battlefield of Kurukshetra.

The *Geeta* enjoins the fighter to fight for the right with a spirit of detachment. If killing becomes absolutely necessary, there is no help. No sin attaches to such killing, according to the *Geeta*.

If the head of the State declares a war against aggression, it should be taken by the people and the fighters as a war of righteousness — *Dharmic* war.

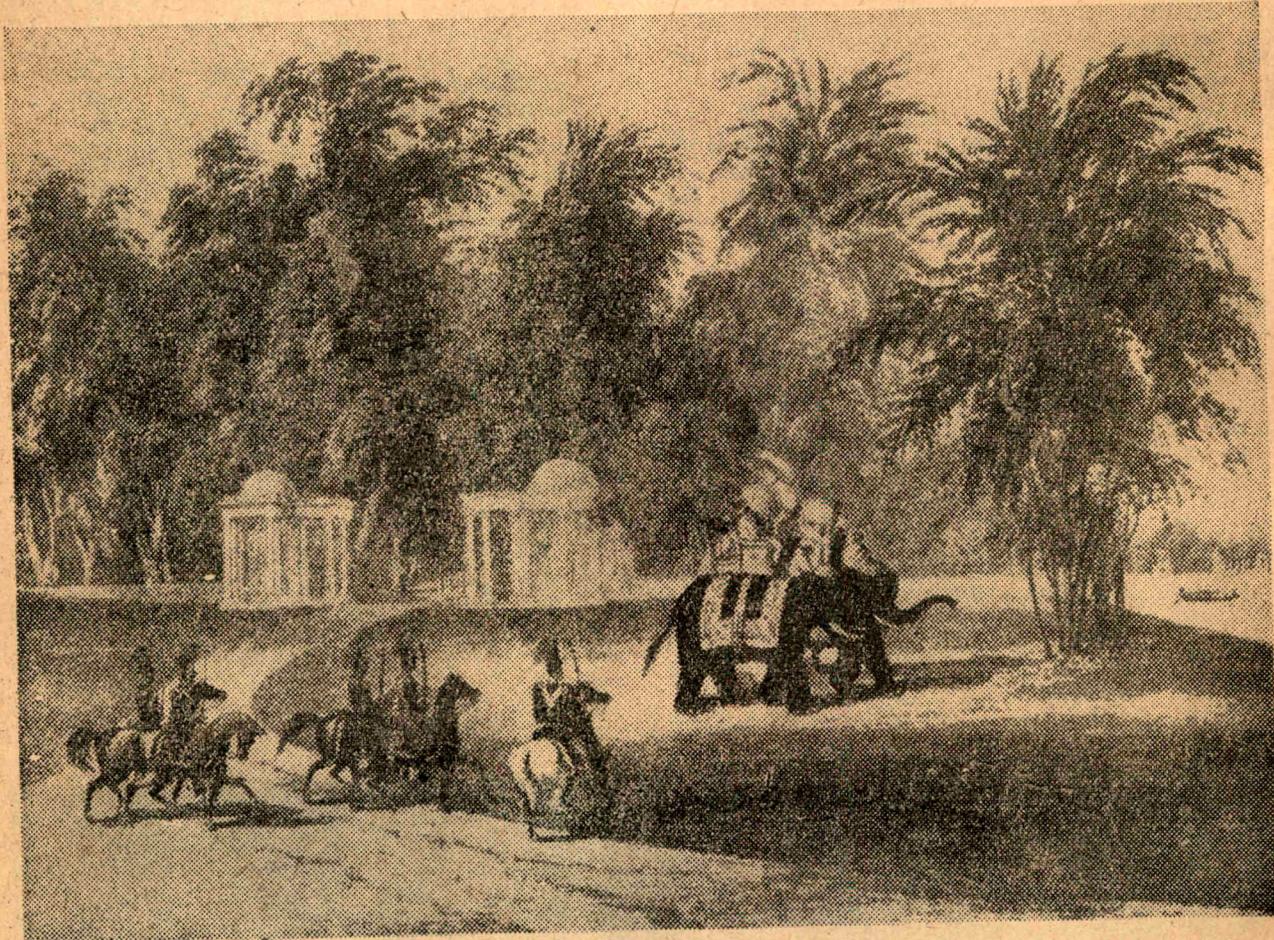
The message of Sri Krishna to Arjuna in the *Geeta* comes pat in this connexion:

"By death you would gain the heaven and by victory you would enjoy the world: so get up resolved to fight."



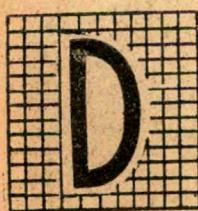
MANAS RANJAN KUNDU CHOWDHURY

ELEPHANT RIDE IN EARLY CALCUTTA



The new nabobs enjoying an elephant ride at the Barrackpore Park

NARAYAN DATTA



Do you remember Thomas Coryat, the English adventurer of Odcombe, who came to India during the reign of the fourth Mughal Emperor Jehangir? He had openly announced in the crowded Mughal Court that he had come to India primarily to have his boyhood dreams of

riding an elephant realised. And Coryat's "crudities" contained a picture of himself riding a tusker.

Coryat, however, crazy he might seem to many, was no exception. The foreigners indeed looked forward to an elephant ride whenever any of them chanced to come to this far-flung sub-continent. It was also a familiar scene in the early days of this "chance-erected, chance-directed" city that the *suhibs* and *mem-sahibs* enjoyed elephant ride whenever they were on a long tour. Even for short-distance travel, elephants were requisitioned.

This was at least the case with the French scientist, M. Victor Jacquemont, who came to Pondicherry in April, 1829 and to Calcutta in May. He covered his journey from Calcutta to Barrackpore with Lady William Bentick on an elephant. Elephant ride was to him like 'travelling on a moving mountain'. Yet, the scientist very much liked it and had a pleasant time altogether. Maybe, the kind company of Her Excellency increased all the more his joy!

But not only Victor Jacquemont. The Englishmen of early Calcutta, and specially the neo-nabobs, preferred elephants to other forms of transport. Its regal flourish, perhaps, enchanted them all. The picture of Warren Hastings, on mighty tuskers, was so popular in those bygone days with the common folk that village mothers used to sing: *Hati me howdeh ghore for jin/Jaldi chalta hay nabob Warren Hustin.*

But it was not only common with the Governor-

General. No English ceremonies in India even in those early days would have been complete without those huge beasts draped in their festive best. Painted all over, tied with flowing *jhools* and tiny tinkling bells and swaying forward with majesty and grandeur, these animals formed an indispensable part not only of distant travel but of royal marches, processions and hunts as well.

This fascination for elephants, to all intents and purposes, came down to the English from the Oriental monarchs, specially the Mughals. Jehangir in his *Tuzuk* wrote that it was the custom for a king going forth on a campaign to ride a tusked elephant, if proceeding towards the east, or a horse of one colour, if moving towards the west: if towards the north, a palanquin or litter was used: while, to the south a cart or car was the proper conveyance. It is interesting to note that the Europeans in India in the olden days resorted to all the four modes of road transport and as Curzon puts it, not only for going east, but also for long-distance travel in general, through dense forests and undulating topography, elephants were the immediate and obvious choice.

And not only in times of peace. In war too, the elephants played a leading role and a large number of anecdotes spoke of the hardiness of the elephants, their valour to save their masters. Akbar the Great, was expert in the management of his large number of elephants. *Philkhana*, as Allama Abul Fazal, the historian-friend of the emperor calls the stable, was as large as a village and at least ten types of elephants were tended there. It was managed by a large retinue of Mughal officers, and, as circumstances stood, was visited by the emperor himself frequently. These animals were captured from the wild forests near Agra or Berar, Ratnapur or Nunderur of the Subah of Allahabad, or from that of the Subah of Malwa. The Rohtas forests of Jharkhand were also the usual source of supply of these elephants to the Mughal *Philkhana*. Believe it or not, in the 16th century, Satgong in Bengal was also one of the principal suppliers of elephants and Abul Fazal specially mentioned it. Bengal's elephants, however, are not quite unknown to our epics. According to the *Mahabharata* many of these participated in the battle of *Kurukshestra*.

After the Mughals, the English maintained one of their largest stables in Calcutta as well as Barrackpore. According to an authentic estimate, in 1852, just before the days of railway travel in this country, which, ultimately, replaced the elephants for distant travel, once and for all, the *Hatikhana* of the Governor-General had as many as one hundred and forty-six elephants. But soon the railways ousted the elephants. The elephant studs began to dwindle. Though in State marches, processions and shikars, the elephants proved indispensable, in 1885, during the regime of Lord Dufferin, there were only thirty-five elephants in the State *Hatikhana*. In Lord Lansdowne's time, there were only three elephants in the Viceregal stud in Calcutta. One of these animals was one hundred and twenty years old and had the proud privilege of having carried Warren Hastings. The animal was reported to have been carried away by the currents of the Ganga while attempting to cross it.

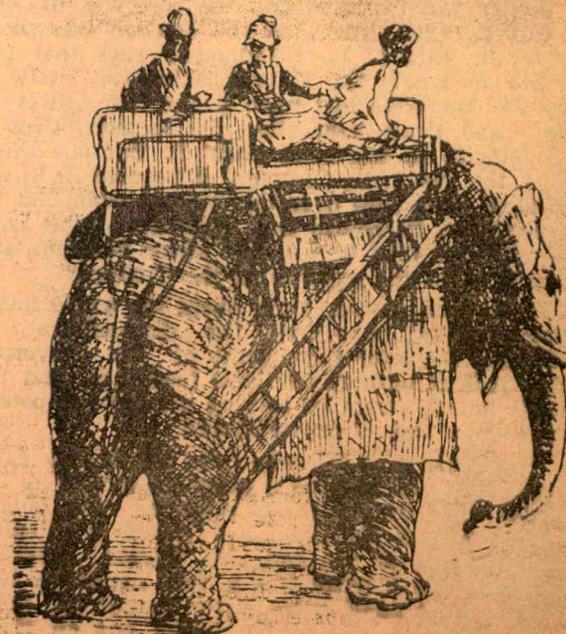
When Lord Elgin came to Calcutta, there was only one tusker to receive His Excellency. It was then thought to work out a plan to revive the stud. But that was not to be. The estimated cost of rupees two and a half lakh corresponding to £16,000, was thought to be a pretty heavy amount by the thrifty British Government. So, the only alternative, left before the English Administration was to close the stud. And it was readily accepted.

The other elephant stud at Barrackpore near

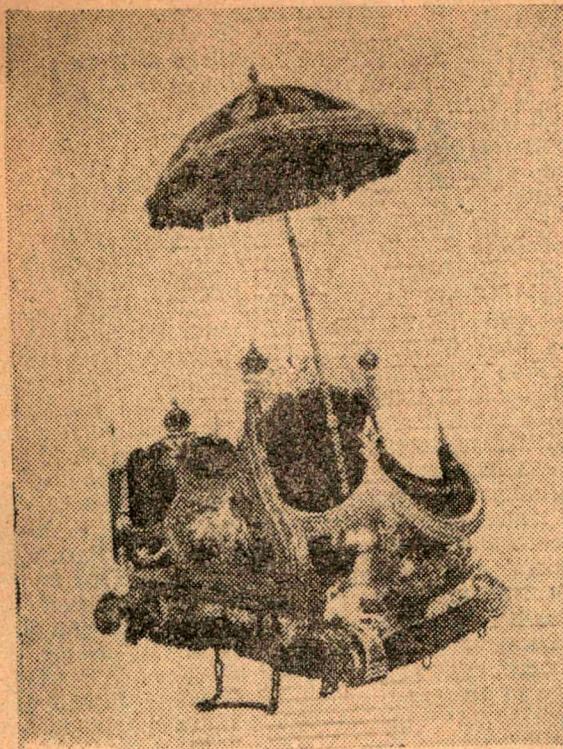
Calcutta was also well-patronized. Though it had the same fate, a little earlier than its counterpart in the city proper, it had privilege of having received all the English personalities of the 18th century till it passed into oblivion. The eminent visitors to 19th century Calcutta never missed an elephant ride at Barrackpore and, of course, enjoyed it. Miss Emma Roberts in her interesting travelogue "Hindostan" leaves for us an absorbing description of the Barrackpore royal stud: "A large stud of elephants is kept at Barrackpore and those noble animals, decorated with flowing *jhools* of scarlet cloth edged with gold, and bearing fair freight of ladies belonging to the Viceregal Court, may be seen pacing along the flowing labyrinths, to European eyes strange guests in a private garden". Lord Curzon affirms that Barrackpore had eight to a dozen of these animals and formed an inseparable feature of the Barrackpore Park. Charles O. Dyle (Tom Row), the famous painter of this particular period of Calcutta, has also many drawings of Barrackpore, one of which depicts elephant rides by the *sahibs* and *mem-sahibs* along the bank of the Barrackpore Ganga. From Emily Eden to Emma Roberts, from Cornwallis to Canning—all the distinguished personalities mounted these elephants in the idyllic environs of Barrackpore, the beasts draped with 'magnificent hangings of scarlet or gold'. The famous map of this settlement by Charles Joseph dating back to 1841 indicates that the elephant stud was located facing the old menagerie with the famous Calcutta Road running between them.

But if the story of Calcutta *Hatikhana* and its elephant rides is absorbing, the story of the famous howdah of Dalhousie is no less striking. And thanks to Curzon, the tale of the Calcutta howdah full of vicissitudes has come to light. In the pages of *Aib-i-Akbari*, a long list of equipage, necessary for the upkeep for the elephants, has been detailed. The howdah was known as *gedylah* which was a cushion strapped to the back of the elephant for a ride.

But Dalhousie's howdah was a bit different. Well-known for his aesthetic sense and distinction, he obviously declined to ride an ordinary howdah.



For distant travel elephants were the obvious choice



The historic *howdah* of Dalhousie before it lost the umbrella.

It was in 1850. The Viceroy was scheduled to meet Ghoab Singh of Jammu at Wazirabad. The railways were yet to come, though it was he who was to inaugurate its advent, four years hence. So, to undertake this long and tiresome journey, there was no other mode of transport but these beasts. And as the old *howdah* was offered for his inspection, Dalhousie was shocked. It was, as Dalhousie wrote later about it in his letter to a friend, 'of wood painted like a street cab so that the very mahout was ashamed to sit in front of it.'

But the mission was urgent. And Lord Dalhousie lost no time to order a new one of silver. The order was executed and the cost was to the tune of £ 1,500. But what the *howdah* was like? Warner in 'Life of Lord Dalhousie' says that the *howdah* in which the Governor-General rode to meet the Maharaja had upon it the two figures of Justice and Peace supporting the Imperial Crown. It is difficult to tell more about it. But one thing is sure, the East India Company at Leadenhall Street was very much sore over this new *howdah* and its extravagance. Dalhousie was 'pilloried to the English public as fond of parade, silver *howdahs* and so forth — at the expense of the Company.'

There was another truth about the whole thing. Whatever may have been the discomfiture of Dalhousie, the later incumbents of the Governor House rode it without the least hesitation, and the historic *howdah* went on serving princes and potentates, kings and plenipotentiaries.

Sometime in 1892, when Lord Northbrook came to rule India, he ordered a complete facelift to the *howdah*. The overhaul was done by the famous jeweller, Messrs Hamilton, and it was a complete metamorphosis of the cab. As Curzon describes later on: 'The *howdah* was a very handsome seat. One the front panel were silver figures of Ceres and Minerva chased in high relief, one on either side. In the centre of this panel, under the shaky Imperial Crown, were engraved the Star of India

and the Chariot of Hellios, in high relief. The Royal Arms were chased on the side panels, and in the border above, the taselled fringe, the Roses, Sharmock, and Thistle were combined. The general effect produced by the silver-gilt reliefs on a background of burnished silver was very splendid".

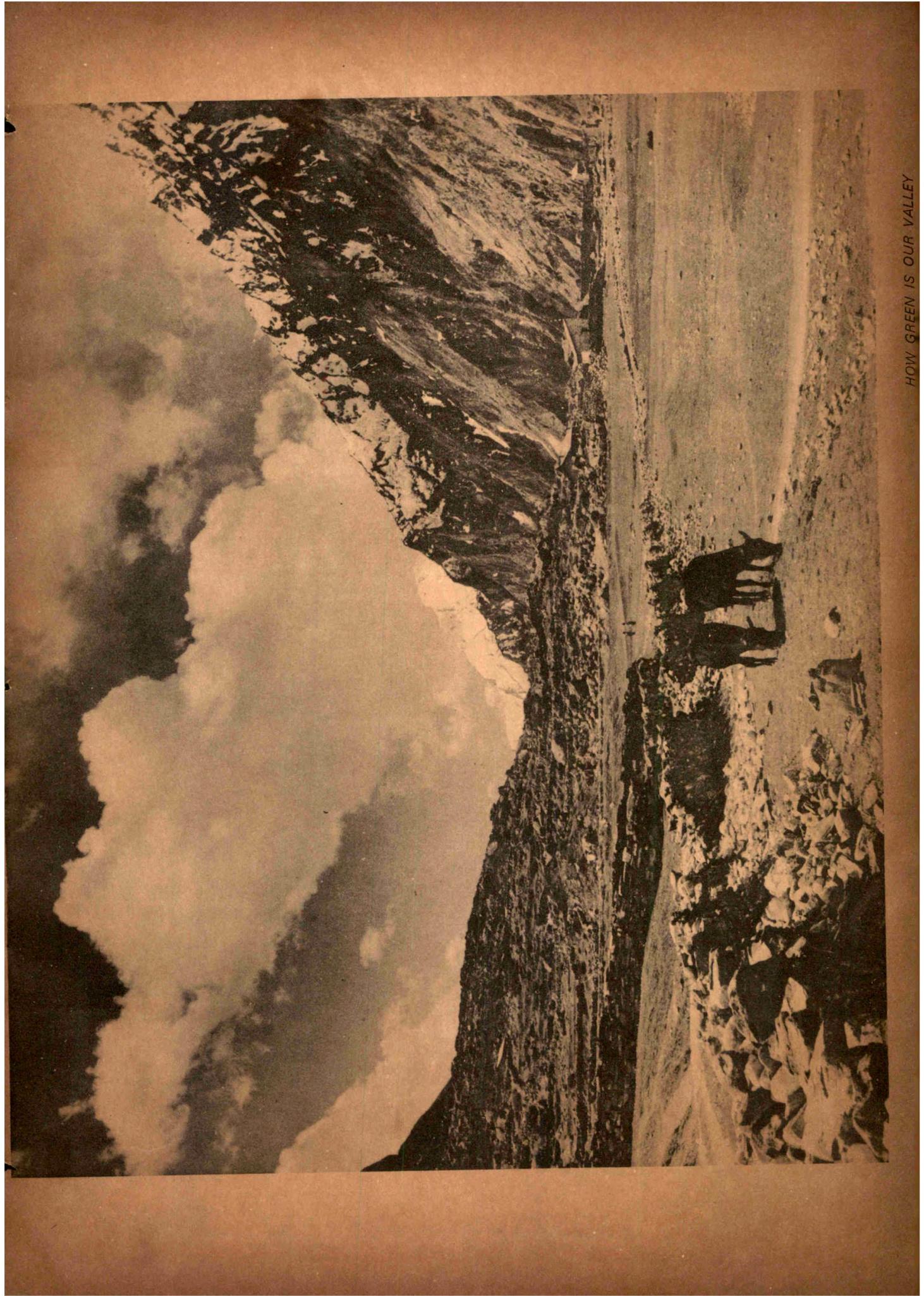
It was this *howdah* which was chosen to carry Edward VII when he came to this country as Prince of Wales in 1875. During his short stay in India, he rose it on several occasions. Curzon with his wife also mounted this *howdah* during the Delhi Durbar of 1903. He however, made some changes in the silver panel. He found the figures of the two goddesses coarse and ugly and had them melted to be recast into more artistic figures.

When the Calcutta Hatikhana was finally closed down, the Government was to decide the fate of the *howdah* too. As the curtain was rung down on the Hatikhana, entire equipage were also transferred to Delhi barring some of them, which went to Barielly. The historic *howdah* of Dalhousie came to the citadel of the British Empire in Delhi, where the most thrilling episode of its life awaited. As usual, it started carrying the Viceroys, the lords and princes there. But that was not all. The *howdah* which was born in the face scorn and derision of the English public soon found itself in the midst of real-life drama. It was 1912. The December-noon with all its chill benumbed the city. It was the twenty-third day of the month. Christmas bells tolled in the nearby churches. Father Christmas was back with his bagful of gifts and promise. And Delhi was having one of its worst winters. A stabbing wind was blowing very now and again. Yet the entire city was out on the streets. The turn-out was several men deep at places around the Chandi Chowk. A Viceregal procession was under way. The lilting cadence of the tiny bells hung round the jhools of the elephants had a somnolent effect on the scene. Delhi was witnessing real royal march full of pageantry. Seated on the velvets cushion of the *howdah*, Lord Hardinge was perhaps having some best moments of his life.

But all of a sudden the air was rent with a loud blast. Panic gripped all and people began to run helter-skelter. The midday stillness was shattered with a hue and cry. There was a mesh of everything. As the dust settled down, it was soon discovered that somebody from a nearby house-top or verandah had made a bomb attack on the British Viceroy. He was injured no doubt but the stout woodwork and stuffing of the much-maligned *howdah* had saved the Governor-General. The bomb had hit the thick metal-plated staff of the State umbrella and broke it.

It is now well-known that the bomb outrage was master-minded by the great revolutionary Rash Behari Bose. The young Basanta Biswas, who actually threw the bomb was ultimately caught and executed. That was the last public appearance of the historic *howdah* of Lord Dalhousie. May be, this unfortunate incident put the final seal of retirement on its fate. The touchy alien Government did not dare to bring it back again in public so that it might remind the sensitive Indians of one of their fire-brands and of his sacrifice to the cause of the nation. It may also be that for want of a suitable tusker, it was withdrawn. That was at least the case when the Coronation of Edward VII was to be celebrated.

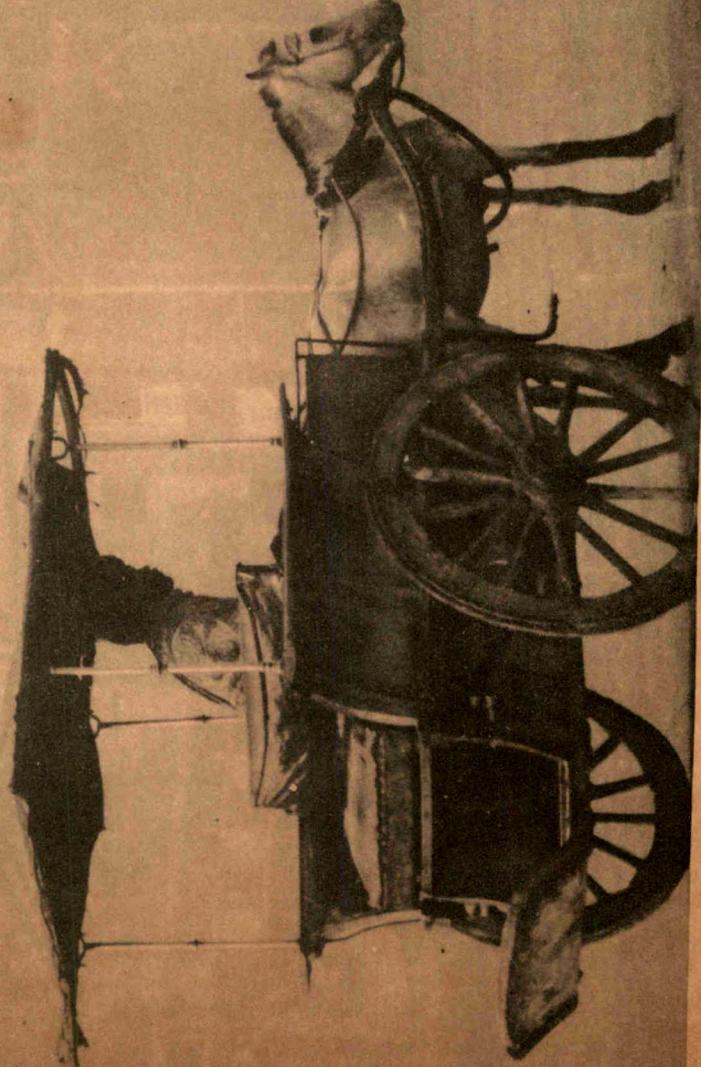
The *howdahs* had the same fate as the royal elephants. Some of the elephants died miserably. Some of them were given away to the native rulers. The historic *howdah* was soon sent to Simla. Some of the tired dancing couples there occasionally retired onto its cosy lap, very much unmindful of the heart-throbbing stories of its chequered career.

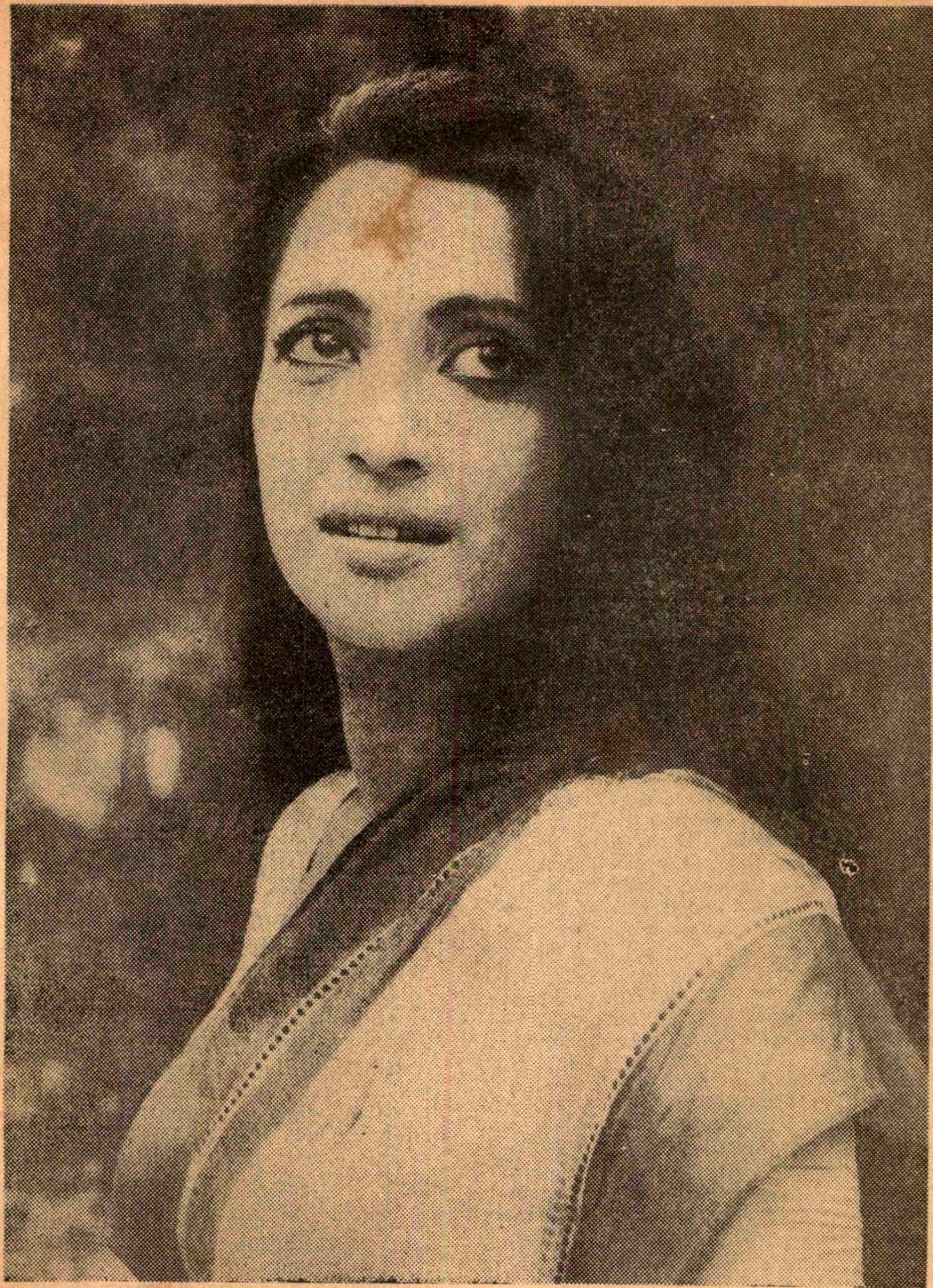


HOW GREEN IS OUR VALLEY

FROM THE CABBY'S SEAT

Photo : Pradip Sen





Memories of Greatness

SUSHRUTA KUMAR DAS

Director Pramathesh Barua is a name which, even nearly two decades after his death, spells out magic to the majority of film-goers. When he associated himself with the Bengali film world as a director of British Dominion Films Limited, the industry was in its infancy. He, by his unchallengeable genius and extraordinary foresight, had performed wonders on the screen despite numerous handicaps and limitations of the then

cinema world, thereby paving the way for future development of this popular industry.

Pramathesh Chandra Barua, eldest son of Rajah Provat Chandra Barua of Gauripur (Assam), was born on the 27th October, 1903. From a child he showed remarkable power of acquiring mastery of anything that he learnt. Apart from being a good pianist, singer and dancer, he was also a tennis

player, a billiard champion, a footballer, a horseman and an expert rifle-shooter.

After graduating with Honours in Physics from Calcutta's Presidency College in 1924 he entered into politics and held responsible positions, viz., member of the Assam Legislative Assembly and Chief Whip of C. R. Das's Swarajya Dal in Assam. About the same time he was also nominated a member of Calcutta University Senate. The Governor of Assam requested him to become a Minister of the Assam Cabinet. But Pramathesh, who had no such fascination and whose only aim in life was to serve the Indian Cinema, brushed aside this request and, with a letter of introduction from the Poet-Philosopher of world-wide fame—Kaviguru Rabindranath, went to Paris in order to learn cinematography. In Paris he came into contact with the famous cameraman of Fox Studio, Mr. Rogers, under whom he worked as an apprentice for about a year and returned to Calcutta after gaining considerable experience as a good cameraman.

After his return to Calcutta he established a film unit of his own called "Barua Film Unit". He was the first Indian cameraman to use artificial lighting in film-making and the silent film "Aparachi" (1932), directed by Devaki Kumar Bose, was the first Indian film which was produced by the Barua Film Unit with the help of artificial lighting.

Prior to this, shooting depended on sunlight only. The introduction of artificial lighting in film-making not only made indoor shooting and shooting after sunset possible, but to a great extent improved the quality of films thus produced. After being the director-actor of a few silent films, Barua diverted his attention to the production of talkies and the first talkie he produced was "Bengal 1933" in the year 1932. But unfortunately, due to some major technical defects, this film did not prove a success as a consequence of which the Barua Film Unit had to suffer heavy financial losses and it was no longer possible for Pramathesh Barua to maintain this huge establishment.

But this did not in the least discourage Barua who, immediately afterwards, joined the New Theatres Limited with added zeal and produced notable films like "Ruprekha" (1934), "Devdas" (1935), "Grihadaha" (1936), "Mukti" (1937), "Adhikar" and "Rajat Jayanti" (1939). Among the aforesaid films, "Devdas", "Mukti" and "Rajat Jayanti" deserve special mention for the following reasons: "Devdas", written by the renowned novelist Sarat Chandra Chatterjee, is a tragedy and its director-hero Pramathesh Barua by his acting had for the first time indicated that there was a gulf that separated stage-acting from screen-acting. Moreover, it was in "Devdas" that Barua had introduced 'telepathy shots'—an invention which no other director could ever have imagined at that time. The songs sung by the golden-voiced Saigal and the blind singer K. C. Dey in this film also deserve special mention. Apart from 'telepathy shot' he invented numerous technical and other devices such as an analogical treatment, under-acting etc. to enrich the production values of films and ushered a new era of modern cinema into Bengal. "Mukti" was the first Indian film in which extensive outdoor shooting was introduced and was the first 'non-Tagore' film in which three Tagore songs (Rabindra Sangeet) were sung by Pankaj Mallik and Kanan Devi—the music director and heroine of the film respectively. About "Rajat Jayanti", suffice it to say that it is widely believed that such a screen comedy has not been produced in our country until now.

At the end of 1939, Barua left New Theatres and produced "Sapmukti" under the banner of Krishan Movietone (1940). After this he, along with Muralidhar Chatterjee, formed 'M. P. Productions' and produced four films—"Mayer Pran" (1941), "Uttarayan" (1941), "Sesh Uttar" and its Hindi version "Jabab" (1942). These films were no doubt good but "Uttarayan" gained particular prominence as the system of 'flash-back' was introduced by Barua into this film for the first time in our country. The roles he played in his films were not imaginary ones or interpretations of the work of others—but they had a peculiar resemblance with his personal life.

It is rather unfortunate that recently some personalities of our film world, have called Barua 'melodramatic' without the least hesitation. These stalwarts labour under the impression that they themselves are the only pioneers of the Indian film world and totally ignore the fact that it was Pramathesh Barua who first showed them the way to future development of the Indian film industry for which they should remain ever grateful to the great filmmaker. It is obvious that such men are not aware of the fact that the personal life of Barua was reflected in his films. Moreover, it should always be kept in mind that Barua's time was an age of melodrama which compelled him to produce films which now seem to be 'melodramatic' but are not so in reality.

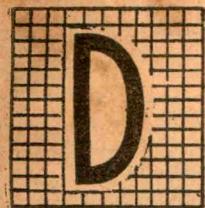
At the fag end of his career, Barua dissociated himself from MP and set up "Barua Productions", the first film of which was "Chander Kalanka" (1944). Then he produced a Hindi film called "Rani" (1944). His last complete film was "Amiri" (1944) of Pioneer Productions. The last mentioned films were not as good as his previous ones in respect of form and content. This was perhaps due to his broken health for he had been suffering from a number of incurable diseases. Barua breathed his last at his Calcutta residence on the 29th of November, 1951, at the early age of 49, leaving behind numerous relatives, friends, assistants and admirers to mourn his irreparable loss.

Before concluding, the following facts might be worth mentioning. Though Barua, a native of Assam, had chosen Bengal as his field of work, Assam has not spared any pains to perpetuate his memory there. A studio in Assam has recently been named after him and with a two-fold object of perpetuating his memory and of affording opportunities of higher education to the poor people of Gauripur, "Pramathesh Barua College" was established here in 1964. The College has since then been striving hard for further growth. But unfortunately, the desired development has been retarded to a great extent for want of financial resources which the poor people of Gauripur, hit by devastating floods and other natural calamities, can hardly provide. Anyway, it is hoped that the college will get all possible help in the near future from numerous fans of the great film pioneer. But it is a matter of deep regret that Bengal has done nothing to perpetuate his memory so far, though Barua sacrificed a great deal for its film industry.

Photograph shows: Sm. Suchitra Sen, Bengali screen's most celebrated dramatic queen, as she is seen in Charu Chitra's just released KAMAL LATA, based on the last part of Sarat Chandra's famous work, and produced by Asit Choudhury.

At two places with one mind

BISWAJIT



OING it at both places may be rewarding but hardly easy. I mean being a screen player here and in Bombay. I am wiser for the knowledge that some worthy artistes from Bengal did just like me and did it well without losing fans for appearing in both Bengali and Hindi films. Thus I may claim to have followed in sure footsteps.

How it happened is not a forgotten chapter in the story of my life. I still remember with a touch of nostalgia those days years ago when I was a greenhorn frightened, though charmed at the same time, by the prospect of having to face the movie camera for the first time in my life and come out of the ordeal with at least a degree of success. In those days the camera and the sound stage attracted me irresistibly but like all new comers I felt just miserable when the moment arrived at long last. I shall always remember the kind encouragement I received from my seniors in the line, particularly the late Bimal Ghosh who buoyantly gave me the go-on signal. And so it happened. I appeared in my first picture. The next one no longer gave me the old fright although I felt I had a long, long way to go to reach what in common cinematic parlance is called stardom.

After having appeared in a number of Bengali films I was offered a role in a Hindi picture. My first Hindi film "Bees Saal Baad" is still a remarkable experience for which I am endlessly grateful to Sri Hemanta Kumar and I have upto today appeared in a good number of Bengali and Hindi films. Certainly I wish to appear in many more.

I have been often asked — and the question seems to be persistent — whether I prefer Bombay to Bengal or vice-versa. Frankly speaking, it is a tricky question and no definitive answer could be offered off-hand. Although film-acting is an arduous, sometimes drab but oftener interesting job both in Calcutta and Bombay, there are some points of contrast between the men with whom one has to work in the two places and between the respective systems and ways of working. Bombay studios and studio men (including producers and directors) do not lack in warmth of feeling and in co-operation but they are more disciplined, methodical and punctual. This is not to speak disparagingly of the Calcutta film studios and the studio associates. But true to our Bengali instinct, we tend to be chatty and informal, not always guided by an unalloyed commercial outlook. Bombay is not a paradise for film artistes and Calcutta is not a dull, uninteresting place all the way one goes. In short, at both places I have been very kindly treated by my colleagues and technicians but perhaps being at home and getting a chance there is a source of comfort for every human being. That is why I would like to be excused if I feel a little more at home while I am speaking my mother-tongue but at the same time I must confess that having played in so many Hindi films I have almost learned to feel Hindi as my second mother-tongue and Bombay my second home.



Biswajit & Tanuja in R. D. Bansal's ambitious production's "Chaitali", now being directed by Sudhir Mukherjee

Having made my feelings about working in Bombay and in my home State known I would next seek the reader's indulgence to dwell on the little charity God Almighty in His infinite grace allowed me to dispense. I have been deeply touched by the congratulatory messages I received after some donations I made here and there. Well, to that I would confess to a feeling of embarrassment. It just fell to my lot to have some lucre to spare for worthy causes. After all, I am not the first donor among film artistes ever. We all know of some generous charity on the part of some film artistes of India although I would again seek your permission to say that we could, collectively speaking, do a lot more to come to the help of our starving and tattered brothers and sisters.

Yes, I love acting in films because acting gives me a wonderful chance to express the inner Biswajit in me. And I think I badly need better and better action on my part every day of my life because a "terrific" rival has appeared before me. And if I lack for better acting in my forthcoming films I may soon be edged out by my rival. Excuse me, I have been referring to my gifted son—Prasenjit.

The New Wind of Nudism



THE film as an art form has every right to search for, and endeavour to attain, newer and newer shapes and styles of expression. As a matter of fact, this ceaseless search for more and more effective expression is one of the most significant facts if not the most significant fact, about the art of the film. I would not be so naive as to suggest that this kind of unceasing endeavour is the monopoly of the movies. We all know that singing, dancing, sculpture, painting, being all varied expressions of man's quest of the beautiful, are always trying to achieve newer forms and styles.

The art of the film is more fortunate in this regard than the other forms of art because it is amenable to more tangible varieties of expressions. The camera as the soul of the movie art has gone through such an astonishing variety of effects during the last fifty years that one almost feels that the dead end has been reached. But on second thought we all tell ourselves that an unpredictably rich variety of shots and the manner of taking them wait round the corner and will distinguish the films of the coming years.

DISSATISFACTION

Thus it is reasonable to conclude that an innate sense of dissatisfaction with the results achieved must be at the root of this ceaseless attempt to get at more striking effect. The whole concept of building up gorgeous, posh sets and dressing up the dramatis personae, the society heroine in particular, extravagantly, stems from this desire for ocular effect on the screen. Innumerable magazines, mainly for women's reading, have been devoting much of their space to enthusiastic description of the film heroine's wear. Definite styles grew up in the 'thirties around what Marlene Dietrich or later, what Rita Hayworth, and still later Marilyn Monroe and some others put on in different films. These styles were necessarily short-lived and the craze of Eve's daughters for up-to-the-minute-ness soon supplanted them by more audacious, dazzling ones.

That the films in the West soon after began to shed the elaborateness of wear of their heroines and sub-heroines is yet another example of the absence of durability of female styles. As a reaction to heavy wear came the spurt in making the women put on scantier garments on the screen. One remembers with amusement how our fathers and uncles were scandalized in the 'thirties and 'forties by the leg-shows, i.e. musicals with a bevy of dames with nothing on below their panties. These legs were "made to measure" so that when the ballet danced an acme of perfect movement was the result.

Then came the realists and the super-realists bitten by the bug of "going back to nature". So here and there nudism suddenly sprang up and a large

section of Western audiences seem to be enamoured of seeing the dream girls and boys in the nude doing grotesque things with a sort of bedroom frankness. From a mere idea to dally with by the "nouvelle vague" people nudism has become a reality in filmdoms in Sweden, Japan, West Germany, Italy and Hollywood.

And the wind of nudistic fad blowing east has at length reached our country. It is not meant that we have started making anything describable as nudism. But a school of thinking in its favour is slowly rearing itself up. The handy rationale propounded by this school is that art demands it so frequently that nudism can hardly be allowed to remain a taboo. It is also not far to conjecture that the opposite school has started to express vehement dislike of anything like nudism infiltrating our films. While the protagonists of "nudism-does-not-bite" want it for the sake of art their opponents want status quo for that very reason: to keep art untarnished. Thus the debate—and quarrel—have developed into whether nudism is an expression of innocent art or it is the negation of art and, so far as films are concerned, pornography in celluloid.

THE COMMISSION

The broth has been now made thicker by the recommendations of the Khosla Commission. The Commission has not only frowned upon the present rigidity of censorship so far as nudism goes but has encouraged its introduction, if need be, in Indian films. As though Indian films are at present like a beautiful woman under a burkha! What is needed is just the removal of the cover and the glow of beauty is revealed!

The moot point is: are Indian films getting stultified because our leading stars are not moving about in their birthday costume? Are their bodies under cover hiding their physical charm to the detriment of artistic purposefulness? Or will not the appearance with Adam and Eve's clothlessness sometimes deglamorize many of them? Even in the West nudism is generally kept within the limits of a long shot and the nudists are shown from rear. A few derring-dos, of course, have reportedly shown sexual intercourse. But our patrons of nudism are already restless about why there should be delay in falling in line with the progressive trends in the West.

The ideal we might follow without neutralizing our traditions of public morality is that nudism may be featured in our films but it should never have a sex-underlined significance in the scene or scenes concerned. A Venus statue is never anything but a thing of beauty despite the nude posture. We must be free from the too prudish stance of making even the hint of nudism a taboo. Let nudism and kissing be there in our films but not as an aid to visual erotic enjoyment. They can be used with perfect innocence provided one knows how to use them.

OFF TO THE UNBEATEN TRACK

Mrinal Sen



T was November the fourteenth in 1968, the day when the nation celebrate Jawaharlal Nehru's birthday. I was in Bombay where, in a small hotel, I was holding what they call "script conference" with the young technicians from the Film Institute and some outsiders. My technicians and I, we, came to a point when a marauding buffalo was to look menacingly into his human counterpart, Bhuvan Shome as the writer named the man, but before we could proceed further to call in a country girl to dominate the scene the hotel boy walked in and handed over to me a telegram. It was an express telegram from a colleague of mine from Calcutta who was to join me soon on location at Gujarat. The message was as follows: MOUSTACHE ARRANGED.

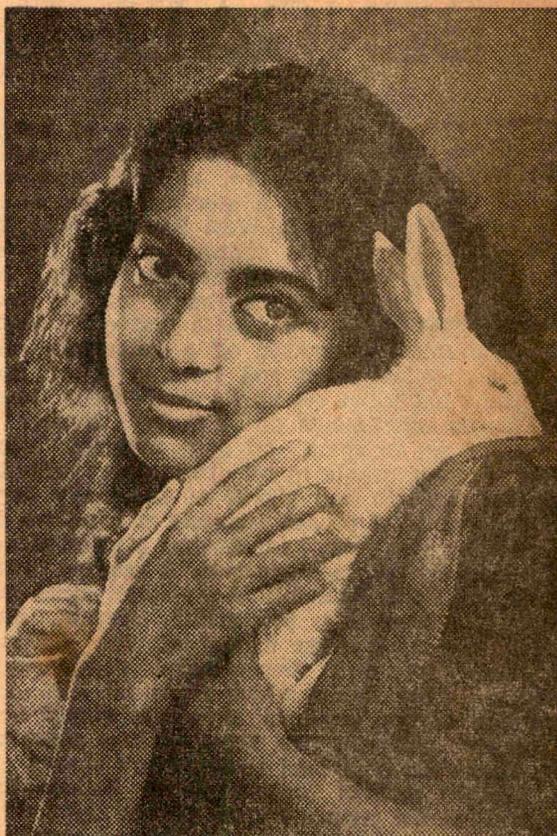
That was all, an urgent message rushed through cable! So, the moustache was arranged, one for a cart-driver who, with it and all, must look a complete Kathiawari. Moustache from Calcutta, costume from Kathiawar, dialect supervised by a local "expert", a Calcuttan to act the role and another, incorrigibly Calcuttan too, to direct the whole show—all these and many others may seem quite perplexing. And yes, indeed, you may very reasonably raise doubts: With all these extraneous elements including an "outsider" like me to take over the captaincy, is it possible to capture the typicals of Kathiawar as one sees in and around a cart-driver? After all, film-making is not Fashion Parade where tricky make-up and typical outfits are all that you need to be "as-you-like".

In 1966, when I made a film in Oriya, all on location, the people raised similar doubts. It must all be just superficial, my study of characters and locale! To capture the soul, they argued, one must belong to the region.

Before I present my thesis on this issue I feel like hitting back and I ask how many Oriya films and for that matter Gujarati too have been made so far by the locals which are close to REALITY as you and I mean by it. Very few indeed. And in Orissa, none at all. Compared to the rest of India, Bengal-scene is undoubtedly better, but the fact remains that in the majority of films produced in West Bengal the regional flavour is almost totally absent.

This, I know, is a negative approach—running them down and thus justifying my own wrongdoing. But what I drive at is that being just "local" is not the thing; to achieve the desired one has to grow a kind of respect for circumstances in which the people live.

Now, to present my thesis: India is a vast country where people wear different dresses, speak different languages, have different physiognomies. If you take a slice of Bengal and compare with its South Indian variety or North Indian or, say, a slice of the West Coast, you will find one picture so diverse from the other. Yes, vastly diverse. But once you know how to look into its details, peep under the skin, into its behaviour patterns, its sociological aspects and if you study the psychological motivations of the people, you will see that the diversity is predominantly on the surface. In other words, the diversity we talk about lies almost wholly in its



NANDINI MALIYA of 'Chhuti' fame, will be seen in Chitralipi's filmization of Tagore's "MALYADAN", directed by Ajay Kar and produced jointly by Bimal Dey & Ajay Kar

physicality. True, a farmer in West Bengal has very little in common, as I see merely objectively, with his Kathiawari counterpart. And what are the uncommon features, precisely? The dress, the physiognomy and speech. May be, they jesticulate in different ways and yes, of course, they eat different food. But do not all these belong to the physical reality? What else? The reality of the interior, as much as I have been able to probe, remains the same.

So, when you go to an Oriya village or a Kathiawari farm, all that you have to do is to look around, carefully observe the details of the physical world and judiciously select your camera angles to capture the same. The rest, the happenings of the interior world, is all yours. Once you present the physical reality which is largely determined by the regional peculiarities, the rest, I repeat, is yours. And at this moment I recall Flaubert's most significant comment who, when asked who was the model of Emma Bovary, said with poise and calm: "Emma is me".

Capturing the physical reality is quite an experience particularly when you walk into an unknown world. With moustache and all I had experienced the same last year, and when, now, I look back I can see my own image—the reverence of a new experience.

DILIP MAULIC

examines the state of

BENGALI DRAMA TODAY

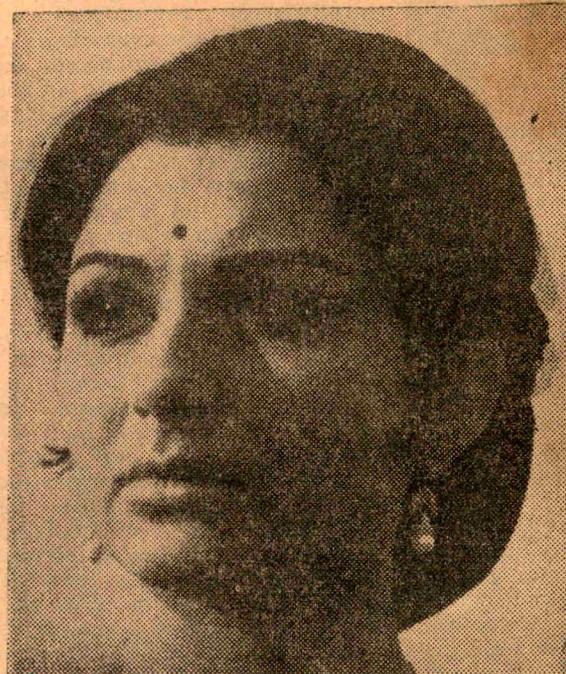


RECENT productions of Bengali drama have definitely inspired us to be at least optimistic about a glorious future of the art in West Bengal. With the rapid change of time, the social structure of Bengal has undergone many marked changes and with that quite naturally the drama has sparked off a completely new theme, conception, spirit and form by which Bengali drama today has set up its own arena anew.

Though experiments on different aspects of drama are yet to spark off any matured effect, efforts to move drama in all dimensions definitely show the strength and vigour of financially hard-hit drama units. A proper scanning of what we are facing today is a 'must' for having a clear picture of the modern drama movement. A modern drama centres round life, its manifold problems, social conditions, injustices of a few selfish tyrants, class struggle, the cry and the agony of the suffering humanity, diversified psychological complications and many other things which represent life. The conception of the 'one-man' show has almost been thrown into oblivion; two, three or four cause the dramatic conflict and lead to the result shared by all. Modern artistes perhaps firmly believe that drama is "of the people, by the people and for the people and so a total picture of life and society is always distinct in the plays.

With the sparks of different experiments, various types of drama come in profusely, a few examples of which glitter in 'symbolic dramas', 'absurd dramas' and 'anti-plays'. Rabindranath Tagore mooted the conception of 'Symbolic drama' in India and the recent productions on symbolic themes more or less follow Tagore's line in which the deeper truths of life take shape amidst a few artistic suggestions. "Bahurupi's" achievement in "Raktakarabi" in this respect deserves special mention. It is undeniable that presentation of absurd dramas is a borrowed affair; Ionesco, Albee, Arrabel are still the idols of 'Absurd' playwrights of our country. The theme is apparently absurd but going deeper we can find out the flavour of eternal life here. Some critics opine that Absurd Dramas expose the escapist attitude of a fatigued man. Time is not yet ripe to give a final verdict on it but it is a fact that absurd dramas like 'Mrityu Sanbad' and 'Chandraloke Agnikanda' have been successful. Anti-plays, recently sweeping the western countries shatter the familiar conception of drama and a few amateur units show their boldness in presenting such plays.

Presentation of adapted themes is another significant aspect of modern drama movement. 'Bahurupi', 'Nandikar', 'Souvanik', 'Gondharva', Theatre Workshop and all the leading groups of Bengal echo its significance in a much louder tone. So Shakespeare, O'Neil, Brecht, Pirandello, Arthur Miller, Gorky, Chekov are becoming more familiar to the Bengali audience and close acquaintance with their outstanding productions makes us serious about the composition of drama and stage techni-



Sharmila Tagore in Satyajit Ray's newest film ARANYER DIN-RATRI, that is now waiting for release. The film, shot entirely on location in around Daltongunge, presents a novel story of excursion of four friends from Calcutta and their strange experiences in tribal areas.

ques. Still a question comes up—Are we not excessively offering our allegiance to Western drama?

With the change of theme, technical aspects have also undergone so many significant changes. Lighting effect, music and setting today are no less important than acting and sometimes they excel the outbursts of artistes on the stage. Conflicts take place in a single suggestive set in which lighting and music bring about the desired effect. Artistes behind the stage today have to equally share the stress and strain of the drama with the actresses and actors and never before did these men get chance to prove their artistic capabilities.

The movement which has shaped Bengali drama anew has been expedited by amateur units but sometimes professional board managements' conscious indifference towards the activities of non-professional units pains us. Amateur units are today facing problems of stage, and they do not get any encouragement from the professional board management. 'Bangla Natmancha Pratishta Samiti' recently organised by 'Bahurupi', 'Nandikar' 'Rupakar' is doing a lot for a permanent stage in the city.

Interest in drama has definitely increased and so drama movements find their way from Calcutta to suburban areas. Still, a lot of things remain to be done. Problems are many, but the flow of life will smash obstacles and enrich the tradition of the Bengali theatre.

writes about



THE origin of socio-religious festivals like Durga Puja is buried in the depth of antiquity. Their roots lie so remote in the past and their forms have changed so much in the course of time that to trace them back to their origin is almost impossible. Yet scholars have delved into the darkness of time to find out how and when these ceremonies came into being. Though their findings lack the precision of what is called historical research, they shed considerable light on the social and psychological conditions that gave rise to these festivals and on the transformations they have undergone from age to age and from one part of the country to another. These are highly interesting studies and provide an objective background to the traditional festivals without, however, minimising their devotional appeal.

Durga Puja is the greatest religious-cum-social festival in Eastern India. Though it is celebrated in our familiar form in Bengal, Assam and parts of Bihar and Orissa only, other parts of India, too, observe it in other forms. Of these the most widely prevalent is the *Navaratra* (literally, nine nights but, actually, nine nights and days) festival which is celebrated practically all over Northern India from the first to the ninth day of the bright half of the

Navaratra and the mistaken association of Durga Puja with Ramachandra during the battle of Lanka. This *Saradotsava*, again, was the festival of the new *Sarat* (autumn) year. In the Vedic (Rigveda) age, two systems of yearly calculation were prevalent. One was *Hima-Varsa* (*Hima*-year), starting from the summer solstice of the sun, and the other was *Safat-Varsa* (*Sarat*-year), beginning on the first day of the autumn season. Later on, a third system of calculating the year from the first day of the spring season also came into vogue. The current practice of calculation from the month of *Baisakh* began in 319 A.D. (241 *Sakabda*) but even now it is not followed all over India. The month being lunar in the Hindu calendar—one month extends from one full (or new) moon to the next full (or new) moon and the months are named according to the star (*Nakshatra*) found closest to the full moon in the eastern horizon—a year has roughly twelve lunar months (six seasons) and twelve days (*tithis*). In ancient times, *Agrahayana* ('agra'-first, 'hayana'-year) was the first month of the year (*Hima-Varsa*). It was then called *Margashirsha* month, that is, the month in which *Mriga-shira* (the Orion constellation) could be found nearest the rising full moon. *Sarat-Varsa* started eight months and eight days (*tithis*) after that and, according to calculations adopted in 241 *Sakabda*, the time is at the end of the eighth and beginning of the ninth day of the

DURGA PUJA THROUGH THE AGES

month of Aswin. The day following is *Dash-ra* (*Das-ratra* i.e. tenth night) commonly known as *Dusserah*. The popular belief is that in the battle of Lanka, Ravana was slain by Ramachandra on the ninth day (*Navami*) of the bright half of the month of Aswin, after having received the grace of Goddess Durga by worshipping her on the sea-shore, and that on the tenth day (*Dasami*) he celebrated the victory and started for Ayodhya. *Dasami* is called *Vijaya Dasami*—so it is generally supposed—in remembrance of that victory. But this is a wrong idea. The season of war in those days was not autumn but *Hemanta* (between autumn and winter) and neither the *Ramayana* nor the *Mahabharata* mentions war in autumn. Moreover, Valmiki does not describe the worship of Durga by Ramachandra (he worshipped the Sun-god, according to Valmiki, by the advice of Agastya), though Krittibasa does so in his Bengali version of the epic. There is thus no basis for the popular belief that Durga Puja in autumn is linked with Ramachandra's worship of the Goddess in the off-season (the correct season for her worship is supposed to be spring) and that *Vijaya Dasami* is connected with his victory over Ravana in the battle of Lanka.

Really *Navaratra* and *Dash-ra* are off-shoots of the more than six thousand years old *Saradotsava* (autumn festival) and they have got nothing to do with Durga Puja though the two festivals later on came to be mixed up together through the tableaux show of the battle of Rama and Ravana during the

bright half of the month of Aswin. That is, perhaps, why a special significance attaches to *Sandhi Puja* celebrated at the end of the rainy season and the beginning of the autumn season. Besides on other occasions, *Yajnas* were performed by the ancient Aryans at the end of seasons. The traces of such '*Yajnas*' ('Rudra Yajnas') still survive in the sacrifices (and these were human sacrifices in the olden times) as well as in oblations during the Durga Puja. Thus Durga Puja is a mixture of the *Saradotsava* of the Vedic times in which, perhaps, was mingled the still more ancient *Savarotsava* (a festival of the primitive animist tribals *Savaras* and *Kiratas*), the subsequent worship (with '*Yajna*') of the Vedic Goddess Durga, the Pauranic stories and various local customs.

The *shastric* conception of the Goddess is first discernible in two *Suktas* ('Devi Sukta' and 'Ratri Sukta') of the Rigveda where she is described as the *Adya-Sakti* (primordial energy) that creates, sustains and, whenever necessary, destroys the universe. The *Devi Sukta* (Rigveda Sukta 125 Mondal 10) comprises eight *Riks* and is uttered by Vak, daughter of the sage Ambhran. Reference to her is also found in the Narayana Upanishad and the Mahabharata (Virat Parva and Visma Parva). It is, however, the Puranas that describe elaborately the prowess and the exploits of the Goddess and her worship now is mainly based on these Puranas. The Markendeya Purana, (c.400-500 A.D.), in particular, narrates the glories and achievements of the Goddess in seven

hundred verses under the title *Durga Saptasati* or Chandi, and it is here that the stories of King Suratha and the merchant Samadhi are to be found. The sage Medhasa, in whose hermitage the King and the merchant took refuge after being struck by a disaster relates to them how the Goddess assumed form out of the combined energy of all the gods and destroyed the mighty demons Madhu, Kaitava, Mahisasura, Chanda, Munda, Raktabija, Dhumralochana, Sumbha and Nishumbha with all their powerful armies. Besides *Markendaya Purana*, description of the Goddess is found in some other Puranas like *Kalika Purana*, *Devi Purana*, *Vabisya Purana*, *Matsya Purana*, *Nandikeswar Purana*, *Vrihadharma Purana* etc. In the Vedas Durga is called Rudrani and Maheswari (sister or wife of Rudra and consort of Maheswar or Mahadeva who is no other than Rudra). Later on, she came to have many other names like Mahamaya, Katyani, Uma, Ambika, Gauri, Parvati, Chandi, Chamunda, Kali, Kapalini, Bhabani, Sambhavi, Mahalakshmi, Kanyakumari, Annapurna, Sakambari etc. The image also has undergone remarkable changes since the cult of her image-worship came into vogue.

In Bengal the custom of worshipping the clay image of Durga became prevalent, perhaps, about a thousand years ago. Its principal scriptural source seems to be the *Markandeya Purana* (*Durga Saptasati* or Chandi whence comes the story of the slaying of Mahisasura by Durga in the form of Mahishamardini), Vishnu Bhagavat (known in Bengal as *Srimat-Bhagabat*), *Matsya Purana* (the ten-armed Goddess is described in this, and in no other, Purana), *Kalika Purana* (where the worship of the goddess by Ramachandra is described, as is also done by Krittibasa in his *Ramayana*) and a few other Puranas. The rules of Durga Puja were codi-

fied by the great Raghunandan about four hundred years ago from the different Puranas and these are generally followed now in the worship of the Goddess. But, in the course of time, a variety of local sentiments and customs have entered into it and these are noticeable in the image, some of the rituals and the conception of Durga as the daughter of Himalaya and Menaka. Durga is described as a maid in the ancient *Shastras* and, as such, the images of her children Kartikeya, Ganesha, Lakshmi and Saraswati as well as her consort Shiva in the background picture, found along with the Goddess now-a-days, are later interpolations without any authoritative sanction. The *Kala-bou* (a banana sapling on the left of Ganesha) symbolises, perhaps, *Navapatra* (new leaves) which might be a relic of the ancient harvest festival somehow associated with Durga Puja and now becoming a part of it. In Bengal, the advent of Durga is imagined as the coming of the married daughter with her consort and children, to her father's house from her husband's home in Kailasa after a year and this idea is expressed with exquisite tenderness in the *Agamani* folk-songs. The pang of the mother's separation from the daughter, after three days' sojourn, is also expressed in those song on the *Vijaya Dasami* day in an equally tender and plaintive note. The original concept of Durga as a warrior Goddess has thus been remarkably mellowed by the lamination of a sweet domestic relationship. The greatest festival of the people in Bengal and some other parts of Eastern India, Durga Puja naturally is looked forward to with eager expectation throughout the year and celebrated with great joy and merriment of which there is hardly any parallel anywhere else in the world.

Yoga for Vivacity

Keshab Lal Day

It is well known that to perpetuate a source of energy one is required to control breathing with the help of 'Pranayam' to maintain parity between mental and physical exuberance. Otherwise it is not always possible to husbandise energy for both mind and body simultaneously. In controlling activities if one of them surpass another, we feel indisposed in sub-conscious state of mind, though consciously it cannot be always felt, but at some length the feeling inexorably appears in a conscious sphere to be considered as a malady, hence inculcation of 'Pranayam' is indispensable.

To give vent to methodically practised 'Pranayam' on a strictly scientific basis a rudimentary course of exercises is mentioned to have some practical effect. At first the incumbent will feel more invigorated both mentally and physically than before and physical maladies if there be any will gradually be eliminated only a few days later.

Some of the 'Ashans' (Posture of seating and movement) are given below to get rid of a number of diseases :

Blood-Pressure: (including indigestion, acidity, sightlessness). In the above ailments 'Paban-Muktasan' (outlet of engrossed flatulence) and Bhraman Pranayam (Pranayam during walk) are prescribed. 'Paban-Muktasan': Lay prostrate as if dead, then lift slowly the right knee up to breast and keep it pressed for some time. Release the right knee. The left knee is to be lifted and kept pressed in the same position similarly. Release the left knee. This function is to be made four to six times. There-

after to begin with the two knees are to be operated similarly together. Now one course of the Asan is completed. The complete course should be repeated at least thrice at the beginning. There should be an attempt always to increase the number.

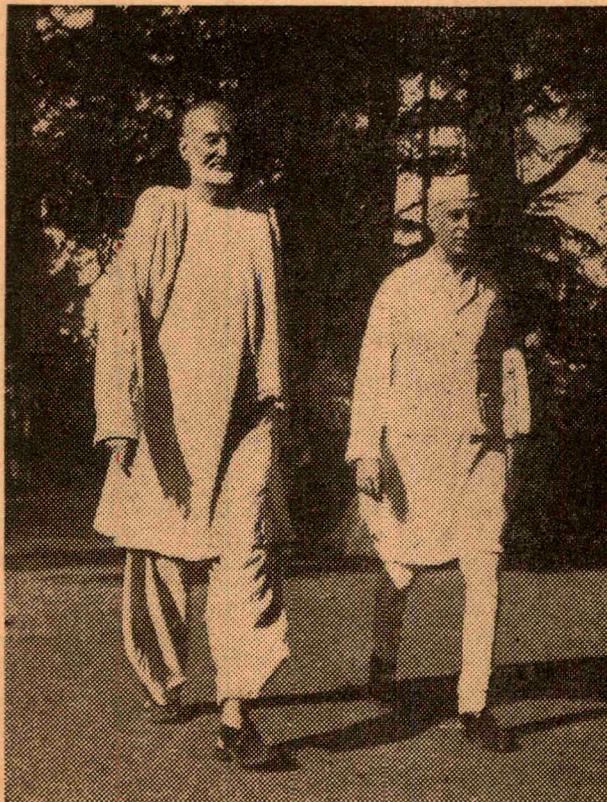
Coronary Thrombosis: 'Paban-Muktasan' (as above) and 'Sahaj Pranayam' are prescribed. Sahaj Pranayam—(1) Lie prostrate keeping two hands on the ground. And along with inhalation lift two hands upwards and stretch on the ground opposite to the head. Next with exhalation replace hands in former position. (2) Lift straight right leg upwards without angling in the knee with the inhalation and putting back with exhalation. Similar operation to be made for the left leg also. Now legs to be lifted upwards with inhalation and with exhalation to be returned similarly.

'Sahaj-Pranayam' and other Pranayam in sitting posture, the breath to be taken slowly and deeply with the nostrils closing up mouth tightly, —keeping the spinal cord and head straight. And exhalation to be made absolutely by the mouth keeping the nostrils inactive and by placing the chin tightly downwards in the neck between two collar bones. And again the head to be placed straight in former position and then the same operation to be repeated.

The aforesaid 'pranayams' if practised may be proved most efficacious in removing many other maladies, e.g. catarrh, cough, fever, diarrhoea, dysentery, indigestion, headache neuralgic pain, eye trouble, giddiness, rheumatism, etc., which we often fall a victim to.

Arun Shome writes about the special relationship between

ABDUL GHAFFAR KHAN and NEHRU



AWAHARLAL NEHRU had great respects for Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan. "Fakhr-e-Afghan", "Fakhre-e-Pathan", the "Pride of Pathans". "Gandhi-e-Sarhad", the "Frontier Gandhi", by whatever name Nehru called him, his words always permeated with veneration

whenever he spoke of him. The particular trait of Ghaffar Khan's character that impressed Nehru is his straightforwardness. In his "Autobiography" Nehru has described him again and again as "a tall straight man, straight in body and mind, hating fuss and too much talk." He was "one of the bravest and straightest men."

The admiration and respect gradually turned into profound love. Nehru admitted that one summer afternoon while dozing he had a curious dream.

"Abdul Ghaffar Khan was being attacked on all sides and I was fighting to defend him. I woke up in an exhausted state, feeling very miserable and my pillow was wet with tears. This surprised me, for in my waking state I was not liable to such emotional outbursts."

But Nehru's first contact was with Dr. Khan Sahib, Ghaffar Khan's elder brother. In fact he knew Dr. Khan Sahib long before he had heard of Abdul Ghaffar Khan. Dr. Khan Sahib was a student at St. Thomas's Hospital in London when Nehru was at Cambridge. They became close friends when Nehru was at the Inner Temple—"hardly a day went by . . . when we did not meet."

Nehru came in touch with Ghaffar Khan after joining the Congress. The first reference to him in the "Autobiography" was a casual one—"The Lahore Congress was attended by large numbers of people

from the Frontier Province nearby. Individual delegates from this province had always come to the Congress sessions and for some years past Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan had been attending and taking part in our deliberations." That's all. He was just a delegate from the Frontier Province. But soon the remarkable organising capacity of Ghaffar Khan overwhelmed Nehru. And he felt that Abdul Ghaffar Khan "has grown to be something more than an individual comrade; more and more he has come to be in the eyes of the rest of India, the symbol of the courage and sacrifice of a gallant and indomitable people, comrades of ours in a common struggle."

Even though Nehru did not give a specific date when he met Ghaffar Khan for the first time, the latter has left an account of the first meeting. "From Lahore I went to Lucknow, where a Congress meeting was being held in 1929. Here for the first time I met Gandhiji and Jawaharlalji. I was not acquainted with them but Jawaharlalji had intimate relations with Dr. Khan Sahib . . . My brother had given me a letter of introduction to Jawaharlalji."

When in October 1937, Nehru visited the Frontier Province for the first time, he said at a mammoth meeting at Peshawar that Abdul Ghaffar was more a 'Fakhr-e-Hind' than a 'Fakhr-e-Afghan'. "There is hardly another person, excepting Mahatma Gandhi, whose work is so widespread and he is truly the symbol of India's heroism and courage." This picture of Ghaffar Khan—a sturdy fearless Pathan who has "so effectively and gallantly led" the people of the Frontier Province in India's struggle for freedom was always before Nehru. It never got tarnished. Time and again he paid glowing tributes to Frontier Gandhi for his bold leadership.

"After the referendum and the partition of India," says Tendulkar, Ghaffar Khan's biographer, "Abdul Ghaffar Khan did not correspond with any of his colleagues in India. He was a victim of vilification and persecution in Pakistan." Nehru was deeply concerned when Abdul Qaiyum started brutal reprisals on Khudai Khidmatgars. While replying to Qaiyum's serious allegations against India, Prime Minister Nehru paid his tribute to Ghaffar Khan in the Constituent Assembly on March 19, 1949 thus: "Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan took the doctrine of non-violent action to the brave and warlike Pathans and turned their great energy into peaceful channels . . . His outstanding qualities are straightforwardness, integrity, courage and devotion to the cause of his people."

On June 3, 1951 Nehru said at Faridabad, while naming a hospital, that he always felt pained when he remembered that "our old friend and comrade Badshah Khan" was in jail. I feel helpless that we cannot do anything about it. Any Government which puts a man like him in prison does a wrong. . . . Those who have had an opportunity of coming in contact with him realize his greatness and nobility. . . . It is but proper for us that we remember him, keep his teachings in force and try to follow them."

At the A.I.C.C. session at Bangalore, Nehru once again paid a glowing tribute to Ghaffar Khan, "one of the finest men that India has produced,

great leader in our struggle for freedom and a man whose whole life was dedicated to the struggle and to the service of the common man." When the Pakistan Government strongly protested against Nehru's references to Ghaffar Khan "as gross interference in the internal affairs of Pakistan," Nehru firmly replied, "The Ministry of External Affairs fails to understand the justification for such a protest . . . Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, a man of heroic mould, and his comrades of the Khudai Khidmatgars were actively and for long associated in the struggle which brought India and Pakistan their freedom; Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and his comrades shared in the hardships and sacrifices of that struggle. Indeed, no man probably in undivided India had such a record of sacrifice in the cause of freedom and in the service of the people."

At its annual session at Hyderabad in January 1953, the Indian National Congress passed a resolution on Ghaffar Khan expressing "Great concern" at his continued illness and detention. Speaking on the resolution President Nehru said that although they had many tragedies, he doubted if there had been anything which caused them greater concern—and to some extent a prick of the conscience—as the fact that with the advent of independence, while they were in seats of power, Badshah Khan "one of the bravest and noblest leaders" far from profiting by independence, actually suffered more than he did previously. "Khan Abdul Ghaffar was not only our great leader—of those also who live in Pakistan now, and his continued incarceration is a tragedy and a portent of the first magnitude. Our hearts go to him."

On hearing the news of Ghaffar Khan's release from custody Nehru observed at Kalyani Congress (January 1954), "I should like to give expression to a feeling which all of you must share, my deep joy at liberation, after long years of prison, of our old comrade and leader, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, the man of God, who has been for more than a generation a symbol of truth and fearlessness."

Till death Nehru was greatly worried over the failing health and continued torture of his dear friend Ghaffar Khan. His only regret was that he could not be of any help to his dear friend. His fear was that any action on his part "might add to the difficulties of Badshah Khan".

On hearing the news of Nehru's death Abdul Ghaffar Khan wrote in a telegram to Indira Gandhi from his village confinement, "Deeply grieved to learn of the passing away of one of the greatest sons of the soil, a noble freedom fighter, who put into practice Gandhiji's ideals of love and peace on earth. Pray Almighty his noble ideals will continue to inspire the people of India. I wish that I could be with you by your side in the national bereavement."

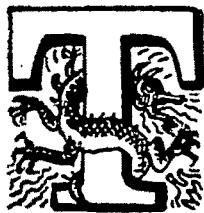
In Nehru's death Ghaffar Khan lost a dear friend, an ardent admirer.

It has been "most appropriate" to award the Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding for 1967 to Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan—a man for whom Nehru had deep respects, steeped with profound love.



THE LAW'S AN ASS

BY IVAN SASSOON



HE law's an ass? wrote Charles Dickens.

If you don't think so then go to Winchester, Massachusetts (U.S.A.) where there is a local regulation stopping a young girl from dancing on a tight-rope, except in Church. Or go to New Hampshire where there is this crazy one as nutty as a fruit cake: "When two motor vehicles meet at an inter-section, each shall come to a stop and neither shall proceed, until the other has gone."

This must have been before Ford had put the world on wheels, when life and traffic moved at a snail's pace. Take this rail-road rule of one Western community: "It is against the law for a train to enter the city limits unless preceded by a man on horseback."

America has always been a strange land of stranger happenings because it has been serenaded as the land of the free, the home of the brave. If you're going to Georgia, for Pete's sake don't shout "Oh boy!" because you'll be violating a law. If by chance you become a fireman in Missouri, remember that there's a law that says that you cannot walk about in your underwear. If you have an animal don't take it to Ohio because a law declares that any animal on the street after dark must conspicuously display a red tail-light.

Funny how in U.S.A. which was once the land of the puritan, there is a law in Indiana which says that persons seducing young ladies while teaching them roller-skating will be prosecuted. In Massachusetts there is an old law which forbids anyone to lounge on the shelves of a bakery. Then look at this strange law on the books: "The size of wheat cakes must be uniform". This was in Detroit.

Some laws are assumed today and have gone into the code of polite behaviour. For instance barbers in the town of Waterloo, Nebraska are forbidden by law from eating onions between seven in the morning and seven in the evening.

Onions advertise themselves a mile away. What about garlic? During the 15th century when Columbus lived there was a strange law which forbade sailors from eating garlic because they be-

lieved that garlic in the gullet would affect compasses and throw a ship off-course!

Connie Francis's "Never On Sundays" could well be adapted to suit life in Johannesburg. Sunday is the Sabbath, when you have to abide by quite a few rules. The Seven Commandments of Johannesburg's Sabbath are (some of which are still enforced):

- 1). Thou shalt not play any other but sacred music on Sunday.
 - 2). Thou shall not buy a drink unless you are a registered hotel guest.
 - 3). Thou shalt not play any sport.
 - 4). Thou shalt not see any film.
 - 5). Thou shalt not work in your garden.
 - 6). Thou shalt not go on a picnic.
 - 7). Thou shalt not drive thy car.
- Dull Sundays lead to suicides, they say, in Johannesburg.

Believe it or not, there is a law in Britain, the Mother of Parliaments, forbidding press reporting of Commons proceedings. The law was passed in 1762. It considered the reporting of Commons proceedings as a "high indignity to and notorious breach of the privilege of this House".

In Sweden they have a strange law that if a husband slaps his wife he will lose his driving licence. There's no law against a wife slapping her husband. He has to turn the other cheek.

Recently a London cabbie (taxi-driver) wrote a book entitled TAXI in which he describes how London is still riddled by odd laws made when horse-drawn carriages were still the cock of the walk. Examples. Any cab-driver who doesn't have a bale of hay on his car has broken the Hackney Carriage Act. In order to go off for a meal a cab-driver must get permission from a policeman.

It is illegal to tip a London cab driver because you'll be violating the 1835 Hackney Carriage Act. But if you don't tip the guy there is a probability that he'll tip you. No one cares to change the laws. Well I suppose they've just fallen out of use!

When a tourist told a taxi-driver in London that tipping was forbidden in London, the cabbie driver replied: "So were apples in the Garden of Eden."

Some laws are like the Northern star-fixed and chargeless.

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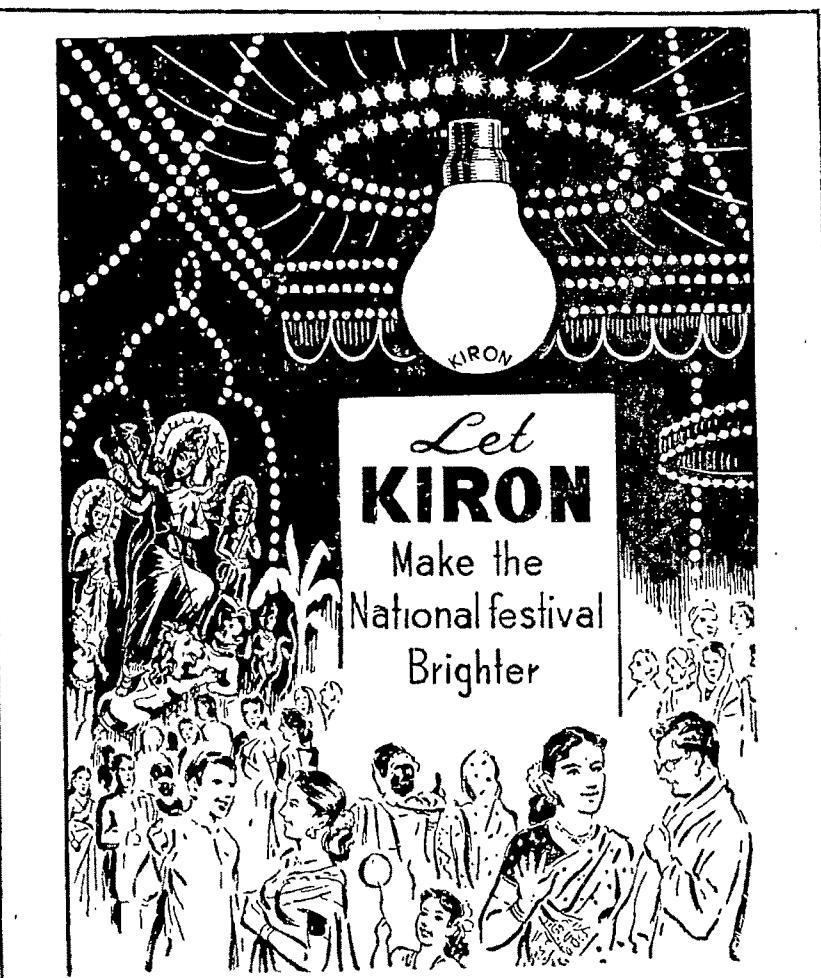
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In the renewal of the East India Charter in 1833, it was proposed by the Kings' Ministers to abolish slavery in India, on or before April 12, 1837. But this was over ruled in the House of Lords. On Aug. 7, 1839, in reply to a question from Mr. Ewart, to Sir J. C. Hobhouse, President of the Indian Board, it was stated, that "there is a commission sitting in India upon the subject of slavery and that as soon as its labours should be concluded, a report would be forwarded to the country (England)." From these tardy proceedings it appears that abolition of slavery in India was taken up rather half heartedly.

And the voluminous Parliamentary Papers of March 1828, Aug. 1832 and July 1838 yielded little specific information.

"The Government observes that the opinions of the most creditable Mussalman and Hindoo inhabitants condemn the usage of selling slaves, as repugnant to the particular precepts both of the Koran and the Shaster." (Asiatic Journal, Nov. 1828. p. 559).

The Provincial Council of Patna in Aug. 1774 address the Governor-General Warren Hastings, Esq., on this subject as follows:— "We find that there are two kinds of slaves in this province, Musulman and Hindoo; the former are properly called

amongst the natives, that any general or direct interference, in the existing relation of master and slave is contemplated by Government." (Parliamentary Papers 1828, p. 335).

In 1826 the same sentiments were expressed by the Governor-General. "I find no statement of existing evils which render it incumbent on the Government to enter into a consideration of the state of slavery in India; under the absence of all complaint, and the apparent want of any pressing necessity for inquiry, I think it would be inexpedient to hazard the inconvenience of a precipitate agitation of the question". (Parliamentary Papers 1833, p. 328, 329).

The condition of slaves in Bengal was not such against which the civilised nations raised their voices. Hamilton in his Description of Hindostan, informed us that "the employment of slaves in the labours of husbandry is almost unknown. . . . Slaves are neither so few as to be of no consideration nor so numerous as to constitute a notable proportion of the population." This remark of Hamilton is an important index in the reading of slavery in Calcutta. As Calcutta is unique in India for her village-culture.

It appears from the above that in Calcutta slavery was an institution accepted in a milder form than the notoriety given to it, and it was readily accepted that keeping a fellow creature in bondage was inhuman, however kind the treatment meted out be. But inspite of the mildness, cases of harsh

SLAVERY IN EARLY CALCUTTA

Mualazadeh, and the latter Kahar. Slaves of either denomination are considered in the same light as any other property, and are transferable by the owner, or descend at his demise on his heirs. They date the rise of the custom of Kahar slavery from the first incursions of the Mahomedans, when the captives were distributed by the general among the officers of his army, to where posterity they remained. All other slaves have become so by occasional purchase, as in cases of famine etc. The Kabolea must be signed by the mother or grandmother and not by the father. Children also born of slaves are the property of the owner of the women, though married to a slave of a different family". (Parliamentary Papers, on Slavery in India, p. 5).

The people discussed above lived in Calcutta and all these phases of slavery were darkly alive in this 'City of Palaces'. The proposal for abolition of slavery was highly acclaimed from its moral standpoint, but questions were raised as to the complications apprehended to grow out of this new project.

In this long turmoil, the attitude of the Government is noticeable. W. B. Bayley, Esq., Secretary to the Bengal Government, in 1817 stated that, "with reference to the extent to which domestic slavery exists in India, under the established laws and usages of the Hindoos and Mahomedans, and to the known habits and feelings of the people relative to that point that Vice-President in Council is of opinion, that the greatest care should be observed to guard against the prevalence of an impression

inhuman cruelties have been perpetuated in the old records available to us. Be it understood clearly that these cases were conveniently used by vilifiers who were the despots of society.

KIDNAPPING CASE

A case of kidnapping was reported by the Bengal Herald on the 9th Oct. 1836, as "A sentence in the Criminal Court of the 24-Parganas, has justly excited surprise and feelings very different from those of approbation. A villain was convicted of kidnapping a girl seven years of age, from his mother and of selling her; and it is not known what is become of her. By report of the proceedings in the zillah court, it appears that this man was sentenced to imprisonment, with hard labour for six months!!! The inadequacy of such a punishment to such a crime, must strike every one. . . ."

Another Calcutta newspaper of August 1837 contains the following article—"Escape of Three Slave Girls in Calcutta". The police daroga of the suburbs of Kidderpore, sent up to the magistrate three girls, two of them being between twelve and fourteen years of age, and the other about seven or eight years of age, stating that they were straying about the streets of Kidderpore; and on being questioned as to where they had come from, they replied that, in their infancy, they were sold to Nawaub Zelaub-ood-deen of Russapuglah, who is one of the sons of Tippo Saib, the Sovereign of Mysore, and that, latterly, they were severely treated, and in consequence of the very great hardships

they were subjected to, they were obliged to escape. Claims have been laid to the children. The youngest of the three is claimed by the widow of a peon, belonging to the Court of the District of 24-Parganas of Calcutta, who informed the Magistrate of her daughter having been kidnapped in Aug. 1834; but the claims for the other children are of a very questionable nature."

Now we should present before our readers a case, whose parallel was reported in the newspapers only a few years back and that too in Calcutta and in similar circumstances.

"On Tuesday the 11th of July, a poor girl, about eight years of age, was brought to the Police Office, in a state that beggars all description: her bones were through the flesh, her hands about the wrist were smashed, and pieces of flesh cut off them; about the shoulders there were large holes, evidently burnt with coal, and her sides were lacerated; there was also a deep wound on the head. She then seemed to be in a dying state and was immediately sent to the Police Hospital in the palankeen in which she was brought to the office.

"The atrocious cruelty was perpetrated by a Mogul lady to respectability, on account of the child drinking some vinegar and sugar prepared for her mistress; and it seems that the wounds were inflicted with an iron pestle and a chopper, about nine days ago; and afterwards, the child was conveyed to Colingah for concealment. This morning she appearing worse, the servants of the lady were in the act of conveying her to Chinsurah, when the palankeen was brought to the Police Office by Sydee, a lad, who witnessed the whole transaction. The sight was sickening, and the poor child appeared to be the victim of the most atrocious cruelty.

"Next day the child died. Khanumjee, a slave woman deposed that the deceased was a slave girl, of about nine years of age; who, when five or six years of age, have been brought from the inundated country by her mother, a Hindoo who sold her to Abbassee Khanum, the wife of Mirza Mendee, a Mahomedan merchant; and ever since, she had lived in the family as a child belonging to it. At the time of the purchase, the child had a Bengali name; but her mistress named her Roheemun. About a month ago she was in perfect health. Belau the eunuch, belonging to the house swore that his mistress sent five rupees with her slave girl; that she had been beaten with a pestle; that the sores were produced in consequence of beating. He saw the beating inflicted by the mistress herself. The sores were produced by beating on three different days; on the first day the mistress, with shoes on, kicked her on the belly, so that she fell down; she then made her put her hands flat on the ground, and with an iron pestle she struck the back of her hands, two blows on each hand; the mistress again kicked her down. Next day the mistress struck her one slight blow with the back of a knife, or chopper, for chopping bones and drew blood from the shoulder. On the third day the mistress struck her on the head with a piece of wood which caused blood to issue: at night turmeric and lime pounded together were applied to her hands, which were very swollen. The case was taken up by the Supreme Court on July 27, 1837.

"Sir Benjamin Malkin, judge, Supreme Court, advised the Grand Jury, that the law permitted, in some cases, a master or a mistress to chastise her servants on provocation, for neglect of duty and for disobedience of orders; and if the punishment was slight and of a nature not in itself exceeding what is generally inflicted by masters, in this country, on their servants, yet if death ensued, the inflicter of the punishment would be guilty only of manslaughter; but if the punishment was violent and in-

flicted with any deadly or heavy wounding weapon; then the crime would be that of murder.

"At eleven, Sir Benjamin Malkin took his seat; an application was made to him, on affidavit stating that an exposure of the face of the defendant to the court and jury would subject her to disgrace and exclude her from the society of all respectable females of rank, in her sect, and he directed that she should be brought in court in the sedan, secure from the public gaze. The prisoner's dock being removed, the sedan was set down in its place. The trial lasted until half past nine o'clock at night. The jury, without withdrawing, pronounced a verdict of not guilty, both on the inquest for murder, and on the indictment for manslaughter; and at once the defendant was discharged.

"Any person acquainted with the declaration of the East India Company about the paternal, patriarchal character or slavery in their Empire would expect, that all the slaves in this family of Mirza Mendee would have been emancipated; but nothing of the kind appears to have been done; indeed, it was not even after that the Government has taken any steps whatever towards protecting the Eunuch who brought the murder to light, from the vengeance of his acquitted mistress."

Strange happenings on the express

By AMIT MAZOOMDAR

The sleeper compartment had only one occupant, a small, middle-aged man called Dasgupta. Occasionally he reached for a book, looked at the cover and replaced it, as the train lurched on. As far as his eyes could see the landscape consisted of limitless acres of wheat, or perhaps it was maize. The journey had been an eventless one.

Suddenly the train halted, for no apparent reason. Dasgupta nervously felt for his book, and then loaded a small revolver. His instinct told him something was wrong, and he always obeyed his instinct. Taking his book with him, he left his compartment, shutting the door after him.

Heavy footsteps began to approach the other end of the corridor. In a panic he ran towards the connecting corridor between his coach and the next one: but the rest of the Express had vanished. Or, more likely, his bogie had been disconnected from the rest of the train. The footsteps were still advancing relentlessly.

Dasgupta fired a warning shot down the corridor; the footsteps ceased abruptly, to be followed by prolonged whispering. So there were at least two enemies to be dealt with, thought Dasgupta. His first thought was for the safety of the book. Opening a window, he threw it as far away as he could. A couple of minutes later a hand-grenade landed in his compartment and blew up before he had had time to think. Satisfied at the result, the footsteps receded away.

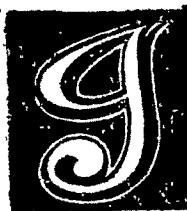
The next day the police arrived to clear away the wreckage, but could find no trace of what had caused the explosion. However, they did find remains of what they assumed to be a small, middle-aged man.

And the farmer to whom the fields belonged found a heavy expensive-looking book, but never tried to open it, not being able to read. In any case, he would have had a shock if he had looked at the contents of the book, for concealed in the cavity were twenty priceless diamonds.....

UMAPADA MAZUMDAR

on

THIS DEMOCRACY



In the words of Charles Dickens it is the best and the worst of time in Indian politics as there has been a breakthrough towards polarisation of forces promising an end to the prolonged transition of 22 years. The fate of Indian democracy, is however unpredictable as the

political forces at work appear to have paid the least attention to the neglected task of building the bed-rock of democracy in the country. Most of the parties are deeply engaged in mass politics for capturing power. There have been wide confidence gaps among them and some of the left parties believe that bullets and not ballots would ultimately decide the issue. The masses who have been bled white after 20 years of democratic rule have little faith in this system. They have not understood the value of self-rule as the participation in decision-making was never felt by them. Democracy has been a password in this country. Most of the politicians pay lip service to it so long as it does not demand an exacting price from them.

More often than not many here shed tears crying that democracy is in danger not knowing that democracy is yet to be born in this unfortunate country. On 15th August, 1947, power was merely transferred from the dying imperialism to the newly awakened nation. India only acquired the new status of statehood by this voluntary transfer of power. But the pre-requisites for democratic growth were not there. India was panting at that time under the worst police administration imposed by the imperialist power. Did the new Government, set up in free India, give all help to the sapling of democracy planted in the country? The constitution was later framed indeed giving people some fundamental rights but nothing was done to create conditions in which alone masses could assert their basic rights. These gaps created the vicious circles and in the situation the nascent democracy did not make any headway, rather it lost its growth vitality. Today things have come to such a pass that Indian democracy only lives in form and not in substance.

Democracy in England evolved through centuries and progressed in the most leisurely way. The economic contents of British democracy were crystallised long after its birth. Adult franchise came into force only in 1928. Still there was no challenge from the British masses of the same intensity as we find in India.

There is nothing wrong in the impatience of the Indian masses. The State of India rose from the ruins of an imperialist power and the masses were economically squeezed for one and a half centuries by the foreign rulers. So the socio-economic tensions were at their height. Consequently democracy could not be implanted in the country without removing mass poverty and illiteracy. The economic emancipation was the greatest necessity at that time. The ground for democracy could have been levelled off

only by freeing people from grinding poverty and ignorance.

The state-ism that appeared later on the Indian economic scene was no substitute for socialism which was to bring equity in the distribution of national income. On the other hand, it made the rich richer and the poor poorer by adding a new dimension of contract-raj to the national economy. Perhaps even capitalism would not have given "ugly" capitalists free hand to exploit people. Business houses during this period had a mushroom growth and many of the existing houses made quick money without rendering any service to the country. All through the period businessmen strode through tricky paths resorting to any means to make profits. The social responsibilities of business and industry withered away yielding to the Machiavellism of unethical business practices.

This malignant growth in the body-economic soon infected the body politic. Politics without economic support had no teeth and economics without the patronage of the big wigs of the party in power could not have the monsoon growth, and it could only grow like a desert shrub. Consequently wealth and power did not remain separated and there was almost a fusion disregarding the tenets of democracy. So they walked hand in hand along the slippery paths leaning on each other in danger and difficulties. Such unholy anti-people alliances work in Latin America today and dominated the British polities in the 19th as well as the early 20th centuries.

Soon the politics of the party in power was degenerated into factionalism discarding the remnants of idealism. It no longer represented the larger interest. By some means or other it kept itself in power and consequently it had been at constant war with the masses whom it was representing. The election results of 1967 reflected the mass resentment against the Congress bosses who avoided mass politics to remain safe in the high ivory tower built by the class interests. So to remain with the classes they shunned the masses. In course of time the so-called democracy turned into an oligarchy. The rule of law—the driving engine of democracy was replaced by the rule of the privileged.

The Second World War corrupted the Indian bureaucracy past correction. Now the rising affluent made use of them in their power as well as economic games. Politicians of this hue had no ideological identification to form political groups and thus they depended on hired workers. It made a section of people demoralised. Every social crime has its chain reaction and in this case it bred criminals in the society. Intellectual services were also preempted by these affluent classes.

These politico-economic deviations were undoubtedly an antithesis to democracy. In a democracy the Government works as a trustee of the people pledging to manage the economic affairs of the country in its larger interest. Undoubtedly it is

to fashion life in society according to the organic and ordinary laws of the country yet it should not refrain from changing law if it is needed to serve the greatest number of people. The parliamentary system assures people's participation in the Government strictly on the basis of tolerance, compromise and adjustment. They are required to avert strife, convulsions and violent revolution. But where the necessary politico-economic changes are delayed or shunned by machinations politics takes a violent turn. But now Indian masses are marching forward to measure swords with the classes.

The strength of democracy lies in the wilful support of its citizens and also it stems from their respect for law. Both are conspicuous by their absence in the Indian democracy. Secondly, franchise is the function of instructed citizenship upholding the cause of social justice. In the elections usually calls came from the persons who have little sense of democracy. While in power they did not make efforts to build up the delicate machinery of democracy balanced on tolerance, vigilance and pragmatism. Without honesty democracy cannot function because its driving force is confidence. These politicians made electioneering an opportunity to capture power. If it does not come to them through ballots they may not leave other stones unturned.

It was not difficult to exploit the mass ignorance for serving the class interest. There were communal hatreds, religious fanaticism, casteism, prejudices and regionalism to confuse the real issues. The nonconformist democrats were too few to challenge the wicked politics. Even the leftist parties in spite of their international humanism called the same tune in fighting elections. It is of course interpreted as "strategy" meaning one living among wolves must howl like a wolf."

It is not difficult to understand that a hand-carter working as a beast of burden and having no education is not capable of thinking for himself not to speak of exercising enlightened citizenship. The crude understanding of economic faults is not sufficient to restrain him from straying into wrong paths. To develop his instructed citizenship he needs congenial material and spiritual conditions. Every individual must have the opportunity to develop his best.

Now come to India. How many people get two square meals a day in India? How many go to bed at night with filled stomachs? How many people are jobless? Why one day's expenditure of a tycoon in this country is the total annual income of many put together, Can the masses take things easy in such conditions? Can they think in the circumstances for themselves as well as for others? Can tolerance work in such a climate of frustration? We often hear praises of the political wisdom of India's ignorant masses. Politicians praise peasants when the latter vote for them. But they know that the Indian masses do not have the political knowledge necessary for running a democracy.

Politics in India would not have been built on such hypocracies if the top echelons did not compromise to continue in heterogenous teams consisting of warring factions with divergent views. They rationalised this unholy alliance as the safety-valve for the preservation of national unity and freedom. Mahatma Gandhi, understanding the game, advised to split the Congress to facilitate development of parties on the basis of ideological homogeneity. Evidently leaders did not like the idea as it entailed risk of losing power. It might have helped non-

Congress radical parties leap forward in the power struggle. The inevitable in the circumstances was the onset of a shady opportunistic anti-people politics and it came to make the people suffer. The Indian democracy was further weakened in this process. Power slipped into the hands of crafty politicians and they dislodged genuine politicians from high positions in order to throw them into the political scrap-heaps.

For long 22 years the heterogeneous complex of Congress politics both strode and crawled but the day of reckoning came suddenly when it was realised that it was to move either right or left to share power with some other parties after the 1972 election. The Congress being a political platform composed of divergent elements ranging from communalists to near communists could not remain united under this impact. So it was a divided party when the impending issues became crystallised at the time of the fourth presidential election.

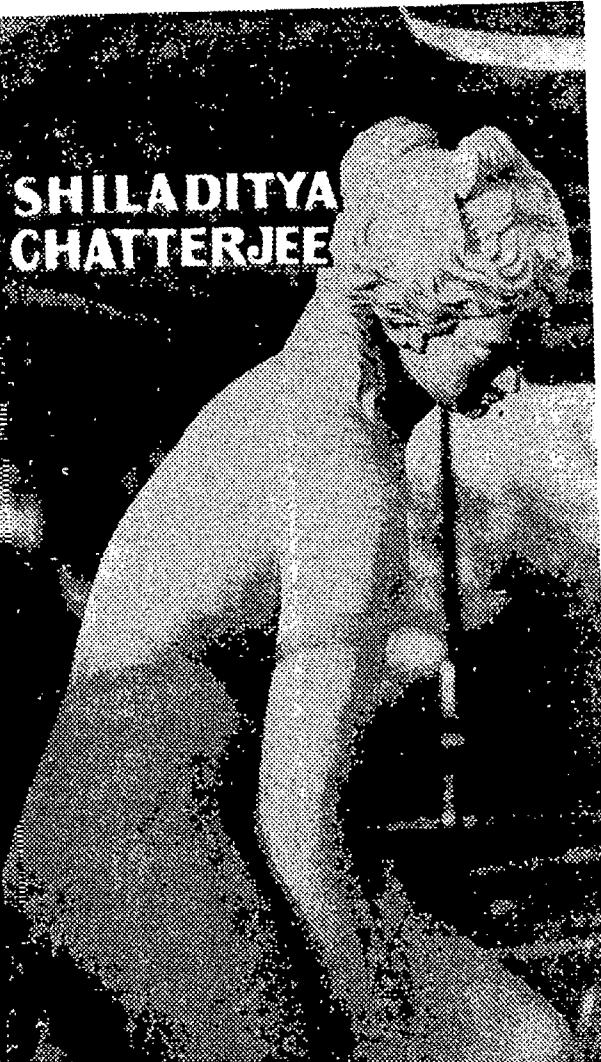
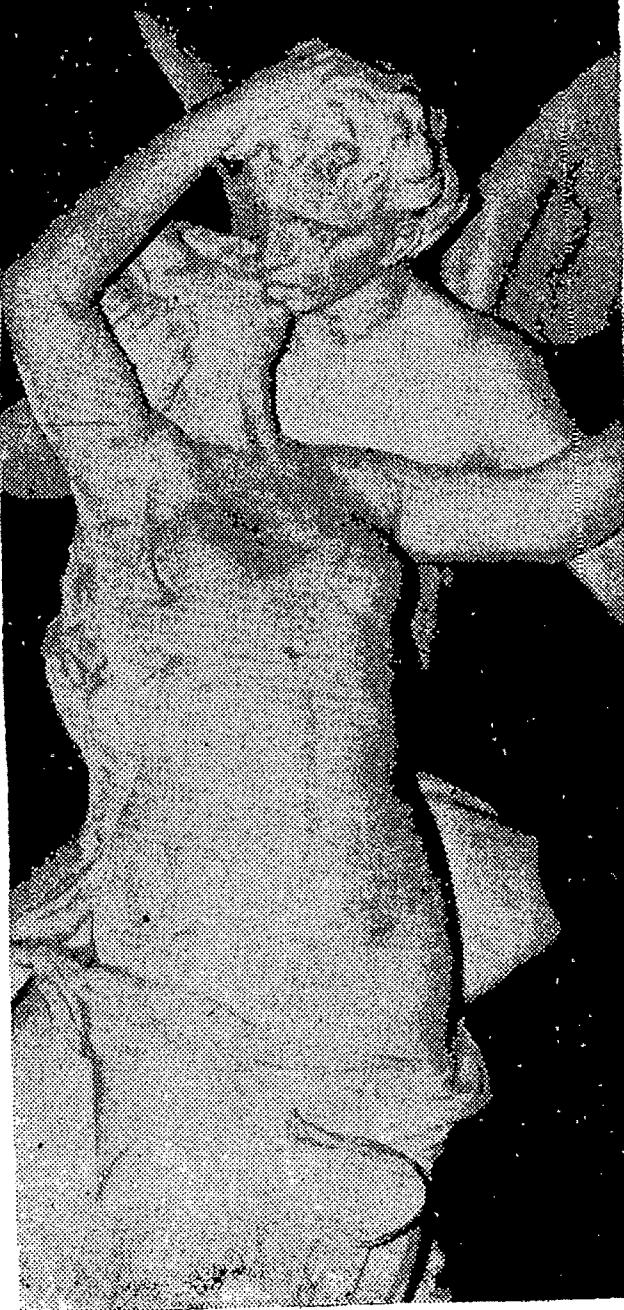
It was certainly the beginning of a new era in Indian politics and it may be called the "renaissance" of Indian politics which was about to be liberated from the decades' bondage. The "young Turks" in the Congress campaigned against the "old turkeys" and ultimately defeated the official candidate in alliance with the "hated" communists. The old bosses thundered threatening to throw out the rebels from the Congress but ultimately they submitted to the inevitable, singing the swan song of unity.

The mood of the vested interests during the crisis was menacing, their tone was high-pitched and their objectives were clear. They made all possible efforts to stem the tide of history. They appeared distressed at the possible advent of genuine socialism in the country. A section of Indian entrepreneurs are truly the pathological cases of the Indian economy. They appear as bad as the landed gentry of the medieval age.

Has the table turned after the presidential election? The time has not come to examine it minutely and the trends are not clear and sharp. Still there have been no changes in political alignments and administrative set ups. Mrs. Gandhi's 10 point panacea for the economic malaise had been nothing but a political stunt. It was scrappy and incoherent but it carried a new urge for fulfilling the obligations to the masses. In the past, similar programmes were not implemented in full in spite of the availability of resources. Is socialism safe in the same hands? Things seem to have gone wrong because polarisation was arrested in the mid way. Politics loses its dynamics if it loses its logical stand.

What India actually needs to safeguard the growth of democracy in the country is the emergence of a left of the centre party. The Prime Minister's move in those critical days came close to the objective. But now it is away from the goal because it will not come by repairing the cracks in the Congress but through the fusion of similar forces into a party under a determined and able leadership. Now the country groans standing between the extreme forces. Such a liberal party can only develop a democratic environment. If democracy is to operate, masses are to be prepared. Democracy is not a by-word but a system run by the people's representatives with the consent of the majority. Thus the peoples' happiness is the yard-stick to measure its success and the people are the shield against any assault on it.

ONE DAY FROM RENAISSANCE FLORENCE



HOUGHTS ran helter-skelter through the mind of Leonardo da Vinci as he tried to concentrate on the designs of a suction pump. The device was too elaborate and crude as yet to be much useful, but later refinements would indeed produce a useful invention. Technology had always fascinated Leonardo and he turned to his engineering drawings whenever his mind was troubled.

But tonight nothing could satisfy him. He could not forget the distasteful occurrence of the evening. Caught in one of his poetic moods, Leonardo had gathered a few of his admirers before the Spina banking house and was reciting from Dante when Michelangelo chanced to pass by. In an attempt at reconciliation, he had said, "Here comes Michelangelo and he will interpret the verses for us".

"Interpret them yourself!" Michelangelo had retorted spurning Leonardo's offer of friendship, "You who made a model of a horse and couldn't cast it in bronze giving up the attempt in shame!"

The taunting reference to the model of the equestrian statue of Trancesco Sforza had pained Leonar-

Photographs taken in Calcutta by Manas Ranjan Kundu Chowdhury.

do greatly. He had spent years of labour, had made immemorable sketches and studies for it. But when in 1499 the French had sacked Milan they destroyed the model and he had been forced to give up his work.

Leonardo could think of no reason to explain Michelangelo's anger. Was it possible that the young man was jealous of the fame he had attained? But being fifty-two and having spent all his life on art couldn't Leonardo claim his rewards? On the other hand the sculptor was barely thirty and all his life lay in front of him. Besides, there was that giant David standing in front of the Palazzo Sigismondi exhibiting to all Florence the magnificence of Michelangelo's genius.

If jealousy had driven Michelangelo to fury then the Battle of Anghiari was at the root of it. He wished he had not taken up the fresco at all. Throughout its execution Leonardo had been diverted to other pursuits. In the end he did complete the cartoons after having been rebuked by the Sigismondi several times for having neglected them. But his cartoons had won the hearts of the Florentines. The creator of David, Michelangelo, was forgotten and ceased to be mentioned save occasionally.

But that was three months back. Michelangelo, driven by a frenzy to surpass Leonardo, had obtained a contract to paint the other half of the wall of the Council Chamber. He had taken only three months to complete his cartoons while Leonardo had himself taken nearly two years to finish his. The rivalry between them had caught the fancy of all Florence and people demanded that Michelangelo exhibit his drawings. Michelangelo had agreed and tomorrow they would be shown beside the Battle of Anghiari.

For a moment Leonardo forgot the evening's incident and his heart burned with the genuine desire of an artist about to view a masterpiece. Sleep would not come tonight. Putting his pencil away, Leonardo picked up the candle and climbed up the staircase to the garret where he had set up a telescope. The sky was clear and the stars bright. It was a perfect night to study the planets.

While Leonardo found solace in the heavens, two men worked feverishly in another part of the town. One was tall, with unkempt hair and had the face of an ascetic, the other was short and stout. The two men were joining together sheets of paper by candlelight and hoisting them against a wall. The shorter man looked tired and yawned several times between his work, but the other did not show a trace of tiredness. At last the job seemed to be finished.

The tall man who was Michelangelo moved away from his cartoons and studied them critically. 'Yes, they had been successful. Turning to the other half of the wall he viewed the Battle of Anghiari with a frown on his face. Mentally he went over all the minor faults that Leonardo had made, but which he knew would be corrected later when the artist set about completing the fresco. Grudgingly he admitted that Leonardo's drawings did possess distinction and grace. Beside the Battle, the Bathers—by which name his fresco had come to be called—provided a startling contrast. Michelangelo was sure that the world had seen nothing more fantastically original. The bookbinder who understood very little of art, and of artists still less touched the edges of the pieces he had joined together and said that the work was well completed. Yawning he added, "Angels. I think we had better take some rest now. It is already well past midnight".

"Go home, Autunno and take some rest yourself. I must have time to put the finishing touches", replied Michelangelo, "and be sure to be here early tomorrow. I may need you again".

Autunno picked up a candle and turned to go.

Remembering something he returned and touched the artist's shoulder while he was gazing at the cartoons. "Angelo, remember you promised to paint a portrait of my wife?" he asked.

Michelangelo turned smiling. "Thanks for helping me, Autunno", he said, "the portrait shall be done. The world of a Buonarroti is always kept".

By midday there was a large crowd outside the Council hall. The Florentines, each one of whom was some sort of a connoisseur, had come to see the sculptor Michelangelo's attempt at painting. While there was a steady hubbub outside, inside the hall there was silence. Silence caused by people rendered speechless at the sight of unbelievable beauty.

The cartoons depicted a battle scene where a group of Florentine warriors were attacked unexpectedly by the enemy Pisans. The Florentines were relaxing beside a stream and some were bathing where the attack came. The brave soldiers were seen repulsing the enemy even though unprepared. Massed on the wall were about sixty virile soldiers each with a different expression on his face—some surprised, some afraid others angry and ferocious.

The Battle of Anghiari, on the other hand was a study of bestial frenzy. Leonardo who had spent a great part of his time in the study of horses had created a masterpiece. His drawings were alive and vibrant. One could trace behind the furious battle scene a studious and serene temperament. Years of painstaking study were responsible for the creation of the brilliant fresco.

Michelangelo's work had that quality which Leonardo's lacked. The Bathers ushered in a new era of art altogether. One of the earliest to arrive was Raphael, a rising young artist. He studied the painting throughout the afternoon and went over every bit of it in detail. Then he came to Michelangelo and said, "I learnt much from Leonardo but now it seems he is no longer sufficient. You have made painting a completely different art altogether. Every other painting would now look dreadfully old fashioned".

By the end of the day, Michelangelo had been established again as the first artist in Florence. Leonardo faded into the background. And on the benches in the Piazzas, on the steps of the fountains, among the tables of the eating houses it was only the Bathers and Michelangelo, the genius who was master in three dimensions and two. "Michelangelo has painted a forest of Davids", they remarked, while the giant David itself was discussed again and admired.

Towards sunset Leonardo walked into the Council Hall. The last viewers were leaving as he came in. Michelangelo was absorbed in conversation with Andrea del Sarto, a teenager who had already gained much fame as one bent towards perfection, and did not at first notice him.

Leonardo gazed at the Bathers spellbound. Without wasting a moment he took out a notebook from his pocket and began to sketch swiftly from the cartoons before him. He was a master, and as such the first among others to recognise greatness. And with the humility that only the great can attain he realised that there is always a lot more to learn than what one has learnt.

The last rays of the sun lit up the Battle of Anghiari. Turning to it casually, Michelangelo was suddenly caught in the spell. Engaged in his own work he had not studied Leonardo's cartoons critically, but suddenly, freed from the jealousy that he bore Leonardo, the breathtaking beauty of the piece startled him. A seeker of beauty, he seemed to have discovered it suddenly. He was sorry he had slighted Da Vinci's talents. The man was truly a genius.

He realised that he had not been able to surpass Leonardo.

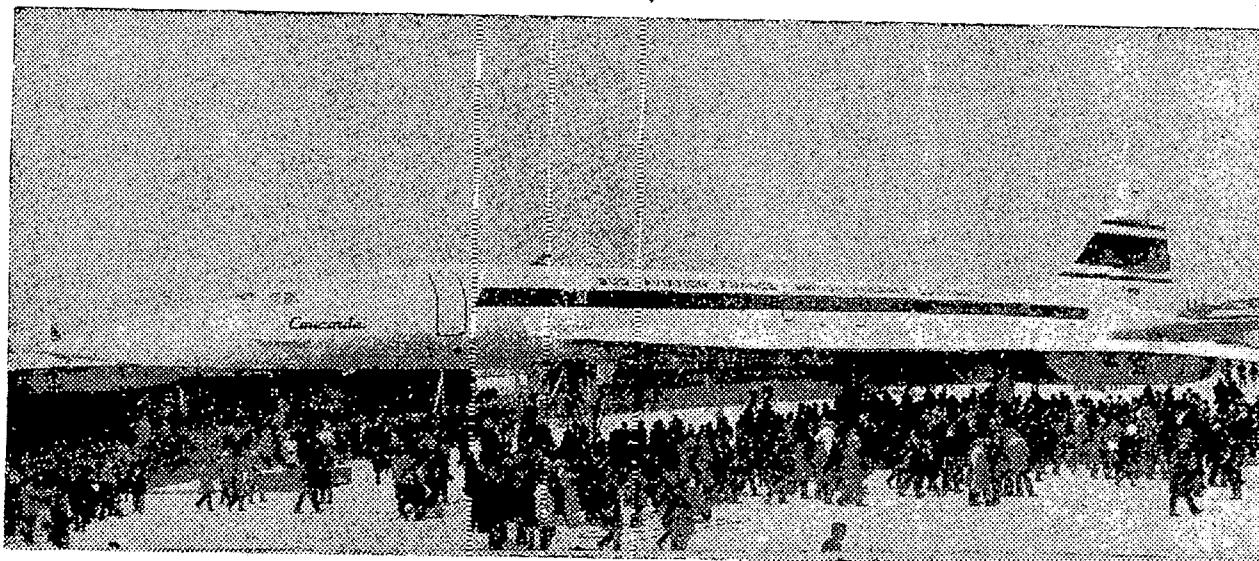
He had been so absorbed with his discovery that he did not notice Leonardo leave. When he realised that the older man had left he felt remorseful about the previous day's incident. Leaving the hall he did not have to walk a furlong when he saw Leonardo ahead of him. Da Vinci walked with a slight limp caused by a fall from a flying machine from which he had not recovered completely.

"Leonardo", said he drawing close, "please forgive me. I didn't mean all that I said yesterday. I admire you and value your work immensely".

Leonardo stopped and grasped the young man's hand in his. "No, no Angelo", he said, "I did not take your words seriously at all. Don't worry about

it. You are young and youth burns in your views". He paused and then added, "I saw the cartoons. You have presented a novelty. All Florence today, why all Italy is proud of you".

He limped away slowly, Leonardo, the Light of the Renaissance and was lost in the dark alleys of Florence. And Michelangelo, the greatest sculptor of all time watched him go. He turned and walked about aimlessly for sometime immersed in thought. On his way home he stopped at the Piazza della Sisusria where the David stood. In the light of the moon the polished marble shone wanly. Michelangelo was a small and puny mortal beside the living giant. And once again Art, the creation of the artist, had surpassed him.



A BOOBY TRAP

By CHANDANA MAZOOMDAR

Edward Jager was walking along the country road enjoying the nice peaceful air when he suddenly heard a scream. He turned abruptly and saw a young girl tearing down the road.

She was rather pretty with pale blue eyes. This rather softened Edward who did not take kindly to screaming girls. She bumped into him.

"What is it dear", he asked.

"Oh! there is a dead man in there", she whispered.

"What!" asked Edward, very astonished indeed.

"Oh, please come and take him away", she shouted. Edward hesitated for a moment but as he was training to be a detective he went in without another word.

The cottage was small and dirty with very little furniture. A man was lying on a sofa. Edward knelt down beside the man. Then he got a shock. The man was BREATHING! Edward saw the girl's face go pale as if she knew the man. Edward got up and held the girl meaning to get the truth out of her. Then he gave a start. There was a man coming from behind the door holding a loaded gun. Then Edward knew it was a BOOBY TRAP. There was a small gang of mad people meant to be in the lunatic asylum. They meant to kill off everybody, rich or poor.....

Edward walked backwards as if trying to run away. He grabbed a plate from a nearby table and threw it at the man. It was a clean shot and the man fell, hurt badly. Edward dashed out of the cottage and into the police station.

The concorde which is the world's first SST was shown at the Le Bourget show in France both on the ground and in flight. The French 001 prototype was shown in the static exhibit for the duration of the show. The demonstrations symbolized sixty years of progress achieved by the Franco-British aeronautical industries whose most glorious production is the concorde built under a long term co-operation programme.

OH, BLUE BIRD, FLY AWAY!

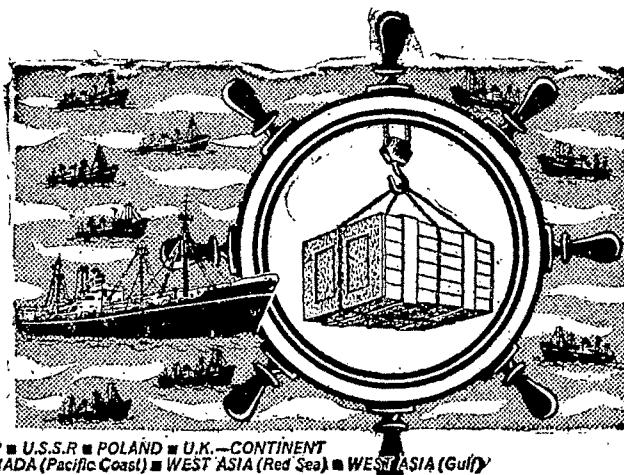
If you close your eyes and just try to think of the map of the world, you can imagine how many aircrafts are flying all over the sky from one continent to another. Right from the very old Dakota to the huge Boeings, people are now used to different types of aircraft.

All the international airlines are trying to get the Jumbo jets within a year or two. They will carry about 500 passengers at a time. The latest in aviation science are the supersonics. The Anglo-French venture by Sud Aviation and British Aircraft Corporations, the venture by the American Boeing Company and the Russians will be landmarks in this science. It will not be very surprising if you have breakfast in Calcutta, have lunch in London and dinner in New York.

The whole aircraft will be like a lounge and there will be continuous T.V. and filmshows, recorded music and other entertainment. Almost all the functions and operations of the aircraft will be controlled by the most modern computers.

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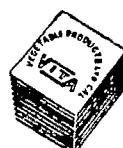


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Samir Datta



HE post-act period now indeed tormented Atanu. And nausea sickened him to death. He yawned, opening wide his muzzle and tried to think of the pine joists in the darkness overhead. The room was a riot of odour. It smelled of acrid 'Chhang' in wooden vats, huge cuts of dried yak meat hung from the ceiling, mould and of he could not tell what. "I'm losing my power of smell even", he thought.

Kesung lay beside him, inert like a corpse. He felt the gentle rise and fall of her soft bosom. He knew her greenish-glassy eyes wore a tame, bovine look. He could not bear to look at her in these moments. He averted her pleading eyes and stared blankly at the darkened walls. Kesung's silken thighs cuddled between his legs. He turned on his side and looked out the open shutter.

The dzong was bleached white in the moonlight. The long procession of white peaks which shut out his vision were perhaps where the Yeti snored in snow. Ah, if only he could cut all this and just trek up there and freeze into a slab of ice! Wonderful, when the thaw set in and the alpine streams one day disgorged his body into the mighty rivers in the burning plains of India away below. So he

mosquitoes out of the air the while. He did not know how to calm her. She worked herself up: his desertion distressed her. She never knew satiety in love-making. Each night she felt utterly miserable when fulfilment was denied her. On Atanu's part, this was but a huge joke—a sort of torture which he inflicted upon himself out of some masochistic pleasure. The only part of the game that somewhat interested him was the courtship. And he so lengthened it that Kesung nearly always found herself in a limbo, midway between heaven and hell. This became as it were an ultimate ritual for Atanu. A drowning man tries to catch at a straw. Atanu hoped to gradually ward off his growing stupor through Kesung.

This was her widowed aunt's home. She was childless and had adopted Kesung from her parents who lived in the next village, Dobju. The aunt was a dowager whose husband had left her much property when he died several years ago a high Bhutanese Government official. She was a withered hag in her seventies. She whined in one of the adjoining rooms while she nursed her carbuncles with mountain herbs at night. When Atanu came in at night she brought 'Kesung's man' a bowl of the local liquor, Chhang and some very firm puffed rice to eat.

Atanu stretched an indifferent arm to Kesung.

THE HAPPENING

pursued his thoughts with enthusiasm. There would be no more boredom then.

The pines up the mountainside soothed deeply as an icy mistral burst in through the window. Kesung snarled like a cornered cat when he jerked himself free from her right arm girdling his waist. He banged the shutter closed, and struggled into his trousers and windbreaker which lay at the bottom of the bed. Directly he struck a match. For a few quick moments the black room regained its lost dimensions. Shadow-trolls danced a war dance on the walls and Kesung rode a dizzy whirligig.

The door creaked mournfully as Atanu unfastened the latch. The brutal wind clawed his face, sweeping over his leather windbreaker. It had hurtled down the mountainsides from the regions of eternal snow. He pulled his cap of fox's fur well over his skull, the visor reaching down to his eyes. He was stepping down the wobbling verandah stairs when an angry grunt from Kesung held him back.

Kesung sailed up to him and started speaking Drupka, the Bhutanese language. Her heavy vowels and thick sibilants told him about its Tibetan antecedents. Although Atanu could not understand the oration he very well followed the general drift. She was pitying herself aloud. He made out one word she was repeating over and over again, "Why, why, why....."

Atanu suffered Kesung in silence, plucking

She broke into wails and smothered the brutal limb with kisses. Soon she pulled herself together, smoothed her rumpled skirt and tossed back her long pair of pig-tails. The glowing beautiful woman of twenty-four was in despair.

Atanu tried to light a cigarette which did not catch for damp. He exhausted all his match sticks. He chucked the moist stump away and mashed it underfoot. "Oh, enough, enough! It's all over between us. Things can't go on in this way any more. Something must happen, must it happen. Yes, it's some happening I want. None of all this joke, this play really... Damn this all," he soliloquised. He looked on the wonderous moon-lit scene. He closed his shutters for a while. Then he took in the endless sierra etched dark and brooding against the western sky. It headed northwest towards the snow-caked massifs in Sikkim, Tibet and China.

Atanu sighed deeply.....

Atanu was normally bored to death in the afternoons. After his daily round to the Lobsang transmitting station where he worked as chief operator he would be at a loose end. Work in the station was only for a couple of hours, and at his sweet will at that. There was no boss to bark at him in these blasted heights. His Nepalese assistant, Ram Thapa, put in an appearance for an hour daily and did all the housework for him. He cooked Atanu's frugal diet of brown, coarse hill rice, gruel without essen-

tial ingredients and boiled potatoes. Just for a change, Ram Thapa prepared once in a blue moon yak meat or mutton and blackened cabbage leaves fried in yak milk butter. He kept the quarters in some order despite Atanu's constant misplacing of things. He daily panted up a winding path nearly a thousand feet to fill a hollow bamboo stem at a purling stream for his 'babu'. And since Atanu had regular bouts of hill diarrhoea Ram unfailingly boiled the drinking water till it bubbled over.

Just for a diversion Atanu was scouring the hillside with the help of his powerful army field-glasses. He bought the aids of an Indian captain at Thimpu for a dime when he had first come to Bhutan. He sighted an Indian military convoy coughing sooty gasoline up the hazardous road toward Paro. The rolling trucks made him nostalgic for action. All at once men under oath scattered about beneath a hail of bullets. The air was rent with cries as men cut down men in a trance, charged with bayonets, hurled grenades at one another and cussed as best they could. And it only fell to the parched-up earth to soak up all the blood.

"Ah, if I just could've some fighting. Like a jawan I would bare my bosom to the bullets. And I should have stood up to flying shrapnel all right. I could become a fearless god then, awoken out of my evil torpor," thought Atanu.

While Atanu watched the Indian Arms personnel bound for Bhutan's frontier with the Dragon the village elder, Dorjit Nima, appeared to take him to Lobsang Stechhu or the festival of dancing lamas.

A line of masked stags faced the demon chief. He leaped high in the air, whirled and pirouetted on his heavy boots like a dizzy top. There was a piercing scream as he scampered across the clopping flagstones of the dzong courtyard to exchange confidences with his aides. They threw a tight cordon around the captive humans in order to grille them for sins in life. The clowns in yellow tam-o'-shanters and loud red hoses traded ribaldries with the audience who rocked with laughter. The ghouls masked like birds and beasts, spread out of deep phalanxes all over the courtyard at the burst of the orchestra. The pan-shaped drums, clarinets, and great telescopic brass and copper trumpets kept up a steady din. Every now and again it crashed into dithery crescendos. Perhaps music in the nether world was like that.

That night Atanu was visited by a nightmare. He saw that he was encircled by ghouls in hell who drove nails all over his body. "You must be tormented out of your stupor," said the demon chief to his aides. And so the cacophonous shades continued to sink their claws ever deeper into Atanu's groin and heart. He was dripping with blood which was molten red wax.

"So this is your palace," bantered Mr. Mukherji the Calcuttan. The visitor was referring to the shabby rooms in the transmitting station which were Atanu's quarters. He jerked back a comma of lock right across his crown and added, "We very much looked forward to meeting the lone Indian of Lobsang. The people at Paro suggested that we drop on you on the way to Rimsang where we would teach at the local junior high school. You know, I been dying to meet a Bengali since I came up in the mountains. I'm already homesick to death." Then he felt at greater ease and continued, "The terrible cold—oh, Gosh! The first day I and my friend, Mr. Mehta started trekking from Paro everything must have been freezing then. And the howling wind very nearly knocked us over to the valley-bottom thousands of feet below. It was all a damn night-

mare, if you care to know. One false step and click, it would be all over with you at once. They frightened us like hell saying that we must face snow-leopards on the way and also Yetis. Sure you've snow-leopards around these heights but to speak of confirmed myths is to make you laugh to one's face. Evidently, the man had the worst of a fright while coming up. At length, he added with a chuckle, "Well, you can't help it. Your stomach compromises you. You must shift for yourself. I just didn't think of any kind of hardship during my stay in Bhutan. One should say that I sold out to a handful of money away from Calcutta. Well, there was no choice. And here I'm in Bhutan at this moment".

Mr. Mehta, who looked like a fair-skinned giraffe, now opened up, "Sorry, your name escaped me. The Paro people had told me all right. Ah, I remember it. I do. Aatanu, am I right?" He stiffened his jaws as Atanu pierced him with his deep eyes. The tall man added with animation. "Thank god, we made it to Lobsang at all. We had been so anxious, you know. We couldn't sleep for three full nights thinking about the trek. They told us about so many dangers of the road.

"My name's Atanu," Atanu corrected his interlocutor. "What brought you here after all?" he almost sounded brutal.

Mr. Mehta nestled closer to Atanu and said, "Atanubabu, d'ye know one Mr. Mazumder down at Paro? He is P.A. to the Secretary-General in the Government office there. He admired you like anything. He said that if he had no family to look after he would have fled into the interior long back like you. You live like a sanyasin, he told me".

Atanu suffered the visitors as best he could and started to feel bored. At length. Mr. Mehta fished out of his trunk a risque calendar depicting a bare-bosomed nymph in a crystal pool and said, "Keep this for a memento. You might need this".

"No, thank you," Atanu declined the offer of the calendar. "I don't give a hang to know the days of the month and all that. Time doesn't flow here—at least for me."

The visitors were flabbergasted.

Indeed, the Lord Jim, of Lobsang cut the company of men, secretly nursing a vague crime which he did not comprehend.

After lunch Atanu showed them round the rooms where the transmitters were. The wooden door yielded as the lock clicked open. The blinking lights on the panel dimmed for a moment and then continued to grind out the nervous bleaps with frenzy. They were routine codes and signals from transmitting installations scattered all over the kingdom. But, of course, it mainly received signals from stations in Western Bhutan. The messages were mostly put out by the Indian military. Atanu twirled a green knob vigorously and a barrage of trills and twitters nearly brought the slate roof down. The pine beams and rafters and the granite walls vibrated at once. Atanu monitored Paro station accurately: the din broke up into an insistent series of taps ending in hisses. Atanu read the homing message, "Convoy going to Hoi. Border active. Carry on to Gasa-Gasa."

Presently both of his assistants who lived in the village appeared. Atanu reproved them for being late. Ram Thapa set about sorting out the trickle of fortnightly mail of the post office attached to the transmitting station. The mail was destined for villages in the nearby valleys further up. The other, a Bhutanese, started restoring one dead line after another and undid the cross-connections.

Atanu came out with his visitors on the creaking verandah. The mournful draft drummed on the slate roofing of the station shack. The Tibetan

crows with scarlet beaks and velvet black plumage soared high in the sky. The wheeling periods grew bigger as they swooped earthward. The hordes of mourning deepened the gloom in one's soul.

Mr. Mukherji pointed to the desolate crags directly in front and said, "Atanubabu, I just wonder how you could live in such a place. Don't you get Indian visitors at least once in a while? Life must be pretty hard for you. D'ye think we could anyhow stick out our new posts in Rimsang school?"

The tic in Atanu's face only stiffened his jaws for a moment and then resumed its usual mobility.

On the back of the mule of Ram Thapa Atanu headed for Paro to collect his monthly pay in the Government Finance Department. He ran across Kesung trudging towards the same direction on the arms of her 'man', a pudgy farmer in his thirties Kesung was much reduced, and looked pale. Suddenly, Atanu felt sorry for her. Kesung flashed her usual arched smile at him. He was glad to see her after a long time. Her aunt had died and so Kesung had gone back to her parents in the next village.

They almost mobbed him at Paro. Mr. Mazumder and Mr. Roy came running up to him as he dismounted. "What's the matter with you? Can something be the matter with you, loon? Completely forgot us? Can't you come down from your Olympus once in a while?" spluttered Mr. Mazumder. And Mr. Roy teased, "D'ye make love to the cold granite walls of your rat-hole?" At length Mr. Mazumder crowed, "I've been thinking of you for the last several days. You ask your sister. Don't ask me why. I'm happy you came after all."

Many of the other Bengalis and Indians wished to host Atanu before he went back. But Mr. Mazumder would have none of it. He escorted Atanu home as his guest. He plied him with Army rum supplied him by his colonel brother-in-law. He fed him plump apples, canned sardines, roast mutton and flattened bread. Atanu opened up a bit as he poured himself the last drink and drained the glass in one gulp. He felt buoyant now. With a gleam in his eyes he took up Mr. Mazumder's little boy, Papu, in his arms and petted his fragile neck. He cracked jokes with Mrs. Mazumder, "Mind your diet, sis. You're already overweight, I fear."

It was an agonising climb back to Lobsang the next day. The mule, overladen with three jerrycans of kerosene oil and the monthly provisions bought at Paro, failed to make progress. Atanu got off the beast. The saddle-pommels jabbed him in the region of his groin. He was leading the mule by the halter but it tore free from his clasp and broke into a free canter. The bag of hens' eggs fastened to the cantles with a string was flung to the stony road. He crouched down to scoop up with his hands the gleaming mess of yolk and white with infinite care. All at once the slight crease over his face formed into a taut smile. He had these eggs for supper. Now he had to miss it as he was only carrying ground wheat and four rupees worth of puckered-up tomatoes besides. Supper without eggs would indeed be a shabby affair, he thought. "Also, I mustn't eat my food daily. Sometimes I must go without it. Something just might happen when I was hungry. Who knows?", he told himself.

He always knew the brutality of total hunger. In his boyhood days he tramped everywhere with a troop of ragamuffins in their town of Mainaguri. They had no money. Whenever the other urchins became hungry they freely plundered the orchards of rich neighbours and gorged on succulent sweet sops, guavas, black berries, jack-fruit, bananas and fragrant mangoes in season. Theft did not attract Atanu. Not that he felt any qualms. On

the contrary, he yearned for the romance of the drastic act to which his colleagues succumbed so naturally. It was because the biles which doubled him up with brutal hunger and goaded his companions into little thefts would go as quickly. He truly felt like stealing food just for a couple of minutes.

Maybe this sagging trait in Atanu made him so hopeless to his father. His father always hummed in his ears that he must stop being a loafer and get himself work with some contractor or the other on the Government irrigation project in their town. The father threatened to drive the son out when he found that he stayed his usual indifferent self. Then one night he ran away from home in his patched-up trousers and undershirt clutching only his matriculation certificate. He was not a little sorry to part from his mother and three sisters and brothers in this fashion, but he could not help it. A vague dissatisfaction ate into the vitals of the boy of eighteen. Fortunately, Mr. Mazumder accosted him at Phuntsoling and took pity on his anguished soul. He got him a job as junior telegraph operator in Paro Post Office. His present post in Lobsang transmitting station was a promotion.

When he first came to Bhutan the elemental scenery struck him deeply. He started to take interest in trekking into dream-like valleys tucked away among gigantic cliffs. The dirging wind, the desolate heights and the dense pine forests all haunted Atanu like a spectre. But soon he sank back into his usual boredom. He tried to drag out his days in the mountains after any fashion. Anyone else in his shoes would have enough cold terrors to outlast his whole life. And the rare letters from home (he wrote back once in months, maybe years) especially from his mother always mourned his absence. But they failed to stir his mind at all. The canker of indifference had fouled his entire soul.

Atanu had the attack of biles in the small hours of the morning.

Hunger stung him like a scorpion. He wriggled out of his warm bristly rugs of yak's fur. He took a sip of freezing water from the plastic carafe which hung from a peg on the wall. He felt the erection of goose flesh all over his body with some unknown thrill. Fitful sensations convulsed him. "Now's the time the happening's going to be", he chanted to himself mechanically again and again. I must get into my woolen trousers, over-coat and cap, he thought. Then he gave up the idea as unattractive. Lighting the lantern he went into the store-room where all manner of bric-a-brac lay about gathering dust. He lifted carefully a double-barrelled gun from amid the chaos. He dusted the lethal weapon and began to caress its hollow tubes, butt and trigger with infinite tenderness. He could not tell the use of the gun at this odd hour. But a mysterious voice from far-off clearly boomed, "Y'e must take the gun". He thumb-pressed two cartridges into the secure magazines and cocked the gun with an expert click.

Soon Atanu's nose started running. It stopped as quickly. The month of October was on the way out. The cold rubbed his skin raw, and starched stiff his cotton clothes.

The sky vibrated with millions of stars. Atanu felt their bluish heat all over his body. Those were blazing infernoes of concentrated gas whose pull could even punch holes in the great surf. The vast black ridges pierced the sky with their snow-capped crowns. Atanu padded between rows of clustered huts nesting on dizzy cliffs. They looked like squares of blackness. Not a light flickered, nor

did a soul stir in the whole of Lobasang. Only the pines on the hillside sighed like succubi. And the air was thick with the stench of the dirt of village pigs.

Atanu took the bridle-path leading to Chhomo Lhari, the noblest peak in Bhutan. He could no longer locate the village which was lost beyond the towering flank of the western ridge. He panted steadily upwards. Presently he entered thick forests of giant pines, spruce and oaks. The upright trunks creaked eerily in fitful bursts of wind. Atanu was in a delirium of expectation. Every now and again he saw visions shadowing him on padded feet. He wished them to gather him into their shaggy embrace and silently crush his ribs. He yearned for cold terror. Something must happen now, he thought. He wanted the visions to salvage his floundering soul from the rocks of lassitude.

A lovely glade deep in the forest was crossed by a cascading stream. Scores of tiny pools formed everywhere which reflected the burning stars. Atanu seated himself on one of the polished stones and froze still. A deep silence hummed in his ears. He clasped the gun tightly. The imperious voice now counted, "One....two...." Atanu aimed the muzzles in the region of his pounding heart. The billions of living cells in his body contracted in expectation of the 'happening'. Atanu's fingers crept with agonising slowness towards the arch of the trigger....

When he woke up the next morning the sun had been up for an hour or so. He was lying in a bed of ferns, his head pillow'd on the butt of his gun. The lofty pine trunks were festooned with a yellow climbing moss all around. He struggled to his feet and supported himself with his gun. He tried to understand the night's happening but could not focus his mind. It was still in a limbo.

He had a magnificent bird's eye-view of valley after valley on his way back home. The one lying directly below at his feet was a crazy-quilt of barley, rye and oat fields. A waspish helicopter was air-dropping supplies for the Indian aid mission in the valley of Gurong. The bright day was immaculate.

A Lama bobbed forward on the back of a mule in front of Atanu. Atanu was struck all of a sudden by the sleek flanks of the beast which seemed to ooze oil. Sinuous muscles tumbled over its body in a cascade of rythm. The cantering mule was a song of joy. Atanu was under a hypnotic spell.

Atanu thought of Kesung: all his frantic search

for the perfect, contour, curve and hollow in her body had ended in despair. Suddenly Atanu felt that he missed her. And he yearned for her quickening touch, her delicious warmth. She seemed as a goddess shot with a halo. Atanu remembered that when Kesung burned with elemental fire he dissipated her like a handful of ashes. And love was never reborn like a phoenix.

Atanu was in a trance. He took in the breathtaking scenery of mountain and sky, stream and forest and an infinite animism gripped his soul. "The happening's here and now," he repeated like a key formula, and threw up his hands with joy. Now he could even salute the outcrop of boulders above the cluster of Gompas before him. He wished to kiss the earth.

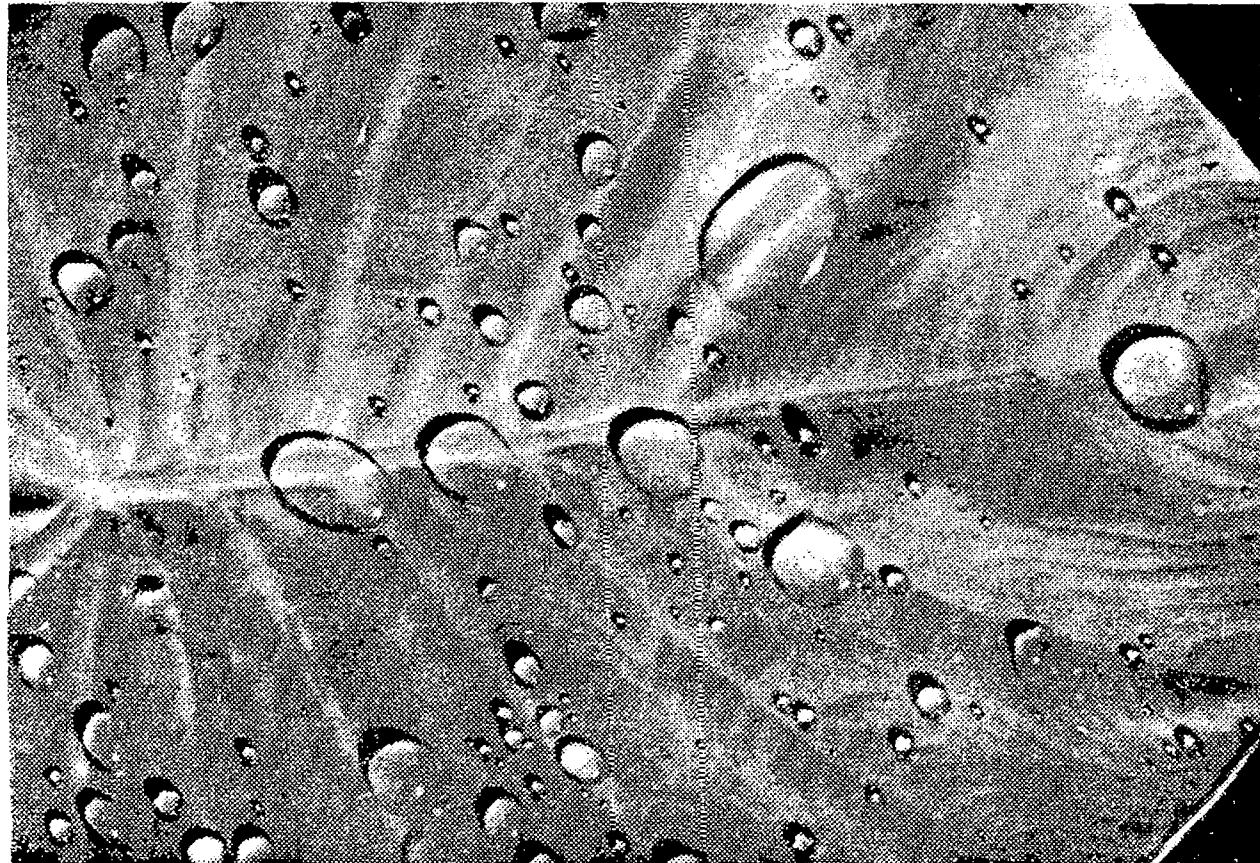
And time which had stopped began to flow again. "Everything's a happening. All that is happens. Even the fall of a leaf from a tree is a happening. The colour of the sky, the freezing cold, my toothache, my hunger all are happenings. And the greatest happening of all is my life. How stupid I've been all this time," he thought.

The whole of life seemed so precious to Atanu at this moment. Life was painfully brief. It was single for each individual. Atanu did not trust any after-life. There was not a shade of Atanu before he emerged from his mother's dark womb into the world's light. There would be no more Atanu after his death. Perhaps some presiding officer in some corner of the universe decided by a throw of dice that Atanu must be born.

He almost ran downhill all the way to his quarters. With trembling hands he unlocked the door of the transmitting station. The homing signals blared all the while. Atanu walked up to the largest transmitter painted green and yellow with the label "Made in Japan". With great care he monitored Paro station, and then fed the message into the line, "Atanu here. How d'ye do, fellows".

He imagined his message riding invisible waves as it travelled to his colleagues down at Paro. The salutations had already reached human hearts. He drew the breath deep into his lungs and felt the surge of blood in his body. A blue vein taughened with thrill. Atanu carefully guided his hand to explore the mounting sensation. He felt he had communicated a real message for the first time in his life of twenty-eight years.





SAILEN BOSE

The first and the last

*It was cold, I was lonely
And a slave to fear,
Then night dark and empty
Unlike anyone stood by me
Anyone and everyone was
Lost in slumber.
Each living in a Paradise
That the innocent morn
Would break

And then he would be born again.
But now at the dead of night
I was awake from the Paradise,
That broke itself;
My eyes turned to the front.
There he lay faced to the wall
Still as the rocks by the sea.
A step forward brought me closer, closer,
To him.

The dim glow that shed on his hair revealed
Youth's escape.
And even passing my fingers through them
Could not make him open his eyes.
Could not? Don't tell me a lie.
He would not, that was all.
It was she—that was haunting his dreams
The she that was gone and yet lived in him
She—his first love.
His quick glances and her secret smites
And the discovery of two hearts in one love
Then who was I? A passing stranger?
One heart and no love—that was me.
Hate like fire burned
And again the flames of love put out the fire.*

*With a touch as light as feather I opened
The door and into a chamber
Darker than before.
Suddenly something as cold as ice
Touched my palms
It was a vase of roses—
Red and fleshy fragrance!
I remember every rose had a thorn.
The petals were cold;
But not as cold as him.
A look through the window
All was quiet
I alone could hear the storm in me
The door was ajar
Nothing had changed
Still he was veiled in dreams,
The past's scornful smile was visible;
Defeat thrust itself upon me
Weary and like a mad blindman
I groped my way to the balcony
Sank on my knees and a tear rolled down
The first and the last.
Morning would break his paradise
A trustworthy friend indeed.
My eyes were heavy
And someone from afar
Put me to sleep.
With the distant dawn whispering its approach,
He could be a stranger tomorrow.*

UTTARA BOSE

(Translated from the Bengali original
By BONANI ROY)

Oh, Existentialism, where are thy pangs?

PRODYOT BHADRA

T.T. is a nice man. He is our senior colleague doing bigger and bigger pieces of work. But I guess he is not frightfully senior. He never thrusts himself upon us nervous juniors. Gentle in look, T.T. is gentler in manners. He smiles softly and speaks slow and if he ever sweeps someone off, he is careful to see that his brush does not prod.

Ethically T.T. is hyper-sensitive; hemmed in between unseemly things, he becomes sad but is rarely convinced that politics can help catharsis. Perhaps, he is too weak for trickery, or for that matter, any manouevring that smacks of lowness.

He calls us 'young talents'. They say seeing talent in his juniors is his favourite pastime. It is not really that. I suspect that is just one in a long row of nasty congenital habits. T.T. is really incorrigible on this score. Our stupidity, colossal though, has failed to impress him. He is so benign. But he is desperate and as the laws of history go, you cannot pull the desperates back. They must go ahead. It is wisdom if you just accept them. I dare-say I am at least that wise. I stalled him with a quick 'Yes' before T.T. could say—"Boy, stop your lazy yawning. Why don't you write for the Puja special?"

Well, I will.

And why on earth should I not write? Writing is an easy job. Certainly easier than answering Clay in the ring. Besides, I am sure T.T. does not err when he finds in me 'sparks', 'promise' etc. etc. But I doubt if he is right about others as well.

So I am back home with no worry about the task I have agreed to. I know about all the things of the world, high and low, and in detail. I am filled with big things—big ideas and big images. Colourful, mellow, vibrant. Enough to roll out a masterpiece. A few rounds of coffee, five or six smokes and I will reveal my real self for the common good of mankind suffering through my laziness.

* * * * *

The second cup of coffee is finished to the dregs, the second cigarette to the last puff and the foolscaps on my table are still lying chaste, all clean sheets. Not a line as yet. I ponder. Am I lax? Is my brain inert? Not at all. My brain is spawning all the time, spawning too fast perhaps and there has been a veritable jam inside because of the lack of space. A bad way for producing a great work which calls for planning.

I have to clear up the mess, single out a subject and then fix my grain on that. Things become easy for a writer of a lesser calibre. He knows one or two things, he thinks one or two things and he chooses one or two things. But I trust you will see me from a different angle. You can feel how discreet I would have to be in sorting out from a jumble my personal problems to write on.

My problems are many and varied and since they are the problems of an intellectual, I believe they will prove delightful to the curious. Anyway, I scan my chart of crises with the rebellious mood of an angry young man. A terrific suspense. Every

moment I expect some deep anguish will bubble up on the surface, the anguish of an intellectual hue: Wasteland feelings over a life drifting in cosmic uncertainties, the cries of a soul fettered by social stupidities or the suicidal urge to shake off the biting ennui once for all. Pity I find them nowhere. They have all gone.

I am too sure of the loud bang of life, pretty convinced of the cosmic scheme and my soul is hardly concerned with what society demands of me and that I wish to go on as long as permissible depending on the allopathic marvels of our times. Oh, Existentialism, where are the pangs—the sages have seen in thy face? Why am I aching with so crude a thing as a damaged liver? Why is wretched finance the only worry in my head? Why my problems are so petty, so down-to-earth that no ethereal flavour of a soul-stirring crisis can float about! A weak liver or an asthmatic lung can only fit into a pathological document. Trying a 'classic' with them is simply comical.

Failing with myself, I have to swing round to my neighbours. So far I have labelled them as a band of lumpish boors; but I cannot overlook them any longer. Sheer necessity. May be, they are not that useless. So I pick them up, one by one, and later collectively. What shocking similarity! When they are all exposed after a casual screening, they seem to have the same woeful list of worries, not a shade different from mine. Their liver is as weak as mine and their pay is not larger either. It looks as if we belong to a closed fraternity where the problems are all the same and odds strangely identical. No novelty, no surprise.

If there is any difference, it may be beneath the surface. In the subconscious I mean, where I am safe to carry on my explorations almost with the diplomatic immunity of an outsider. The prospect inspires me as much as it scares. I have little doubt that writing about a neighbour's subconscious is always a risky venture. Who wants to be kicked into unfelt desires or unseen problems? Is your head really safe when you drag someone into these obscurities, even though you leave none to suspect your missionary zeal? If you tend to go even after so much of warning, you will be heading for a sort of communal flare-up.

But I am a wise guy and pluckless at that. I figure my head is costlier than yours and I like to keep well away from all riotous probabilities: As it dawns on me that writing on problems, personal or otherwise, might breed more instead of solving even a single, I seek to release myself on safer things like novels or short stories where there will be no fear of lynching by inimical neighbours.

In fictions I can create anything I like—Lilliputs or Gullivers, idiots or geniuses as long as my fancy can accommodate them. All will be my brain children and like a stern-faced, red-eyed father I can rule over them, tyrannically if I so desire. I am free to throw my kids into a rough sea and as they will struggle, I can either sit tight and get Lucretian pleasure or rush to their rescue like a good Samaritan. Their fate is in my hands and I can roam about in the manner of that old aristocrat who takes his morning stroll with his Alsatian chain.

ed. Most exalted mastership over most helpless submission. A little polishing of imagination and the route to the royal pleasure is open.

Possibly my imagination is now a bit sapless through long years of disuse. I hope it will gain back its ancient lustre before my fourth fag burns itself out. What poses to be the pinching snag is that imagination, once boosted, may be so vigorously active that I may finally lose my grip over its mechanism. A heavy dose of concoction will then seep in and products will grow all out of proportions. No character will seem real, no event plausible. And readers will feel sorry not so much for my literary misfire as for my constipation.

I am completely fed up, now that I have discovered that pure literature is not the sector where I can invest and thrive. Whatever I hold gives way like a broken prop. What a cruel plight fate is driving me in! I did not ever imagine that Providence would be so rough in its dealings with me. It ought to have sensed that if I were lost in the wilderness of indecision, human lore would suffer a great deal. But the ways of Divinity are inscrutable. Or what pulled me to the idea of a travelogue when all hopes were buried and I was waiting for my Doomsday?

Writing a travelogue is the easiest of literary exercises. Every travel has a sure beginning and a surer end. The way you move along is a definite map, the sights you see are definite spots; the suitcase you lose on the way is a definite object and the kilos you lose or gain in the process are all definite weights. A travel has an arithmetic, a system within the framework of geography.

So travelogue, at long last. I am ready, almost alert like a kingfisher who is sure of seizing its prey in an instant dive. Before the final plunge I span over geography with a complacent delight. On a quick ride I sneak into London but soon get bored with its smog and fly into a Paris night-club but I cannot stay long because I must see the snows of Switzerland. How exciting! But the blasted readers are not to be duped by these 'myths' of travels even though they are damned sure that I feel real homesick for the places where people speak English, miniskirts swarm and snow falls. Demands of realism must be relaxed for a travelogue. Or I will have to boil realism over an account of Lilooah or at the farthest end, Simultala where I had once been with a consumptive uncle of my father. Sober readers, don't be cynical if one's geographical exploits are miserably cramped.

However, if you insist on travel stories, I will not fail you. Only my routes will be difficult and the places I will touch may be seen either through a telescope or through intuition. In brief, concepts of your terrestrial geography must fall off to propel you to physics or philosophy. These are the fields where the crop is always bumper and on the increase. No Law of Diminishing Returns. The two are vast, rich and quite befitting my stature of intellect.

I wander and wander floating away from my closed garret, slowly, steadily to the atmosphere, soaring still higher and higher to the infinite void till the frisky plays of light, heat and sound are all chilled into a transcendental silence and philosophy takes the cue for carrying me farther, pulling across the solar complex to the supreme Brahman who is the be all and end all of things and 'nothings'. There ends the journey and I am back to my seat recollecting emotions in tranquillity.

The trip has been immensely exhilarating and the things I have learnt on the way prove extremely fascinating. Now I can record why the space is so quiet, why sound travels much slower than light and what will happen if mass is transformed into

energy. And finally I am apt to contend how foolish all these enquiries are without a reference to the Paramatma, the Soul of Souls.

Something cramps my hands from within as I draw up a sheet of paper to lay down my travel in the airy lands. A shiver of bitter chill. The first flush of excitement over, I can now see clearly that the track I have travelled along is a beaten track and that there is no drama in saying aloud that light has a tremendous velocity or that Brahman over-lords the Three Worlds. They are all cliches blunted by repetitions through the ages.

But philosophy and physics are infinitely great. I have to explore some uncharted areas, identify some unlocated behaviours of sound and energy and talk about some unseen aspects of the Param-Brahman. New discoveries, new theories. All very revolutionary, all very baffling. I'll be great.

Alas, greatness cannot be a self-generated status. I am great only with reference to your recognition. Once you withdraw your support, I will be stripped of my coloured attire. As long as you rally round me, I am safe on my high pedestal. And whatever I choose to send down to the pigmy mortals from that lofty perch will pass for 'great'. In these days of democratic upsurge popular support is all that counts. Be sure of that and fling on the idiots that $A + B$ whole squared, when enlarged, comes to $A^2 + B^2$ with that wretched $2AB$ missed on the way. I bet many will be docile enough to let it slip away.

Most 'greats' are comically silly. Yet they are not shoved into the lumberroom simply because their authors are cunning before they are great. They make sure that the admirers are close by when they venture to spew out their stinking stuff. This is a wise man's strategy and I am not averse to employing it in my own case. What's wrong in climbing up to greatness along this ladder of mass pampering? It will help me crush the policemen among the intellectuals who till now have been too peevish to merge with the masses.

All this is sound logic. But how can I mobilize a band of fanatic clappers who will lob me to greatness the moment I am out of my attic? For all these yearn I have raised enemies and enemies only.

* * * * *

So I cannot hope to be great. I cannot write anything. I have turned every stone and failed everywhere. For so long I had the idea that poor humanity was waiting for my exploits. One day I would salvage it from the morass of trash and nonsense. It seemed almost a divine assignment. Now I am dismayed to find that the world can go without me and smoothly at that.

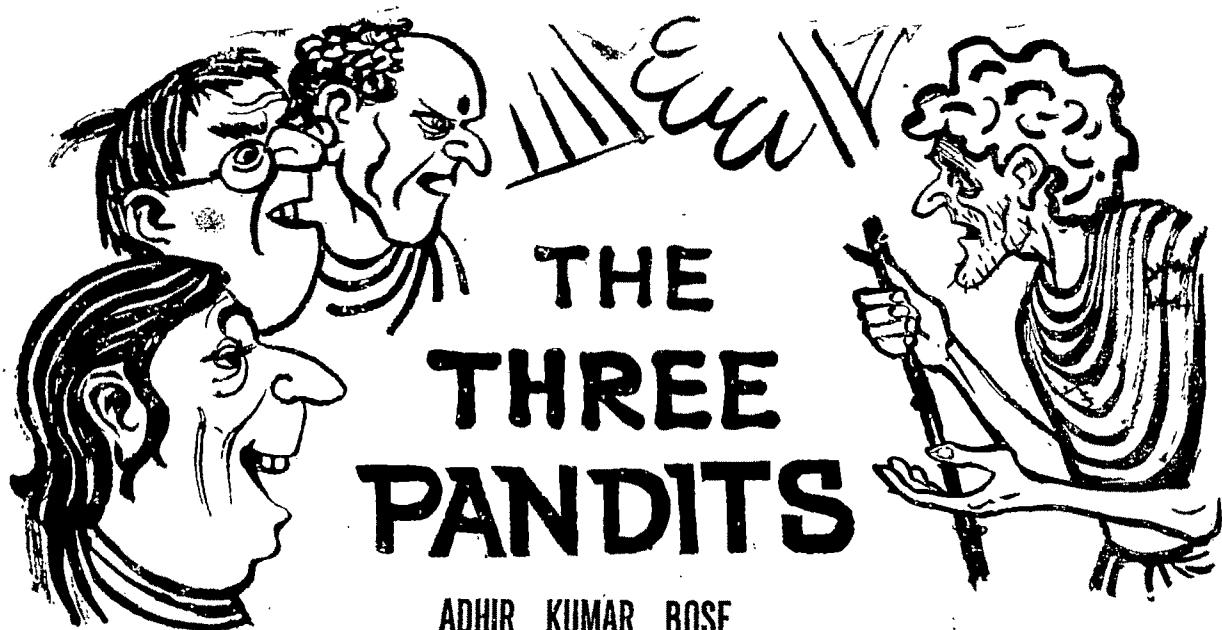
Sad, disappointed, I am constrained to decide not to go in for writing. The decision hangs heavy on me and I cannot escape a sharp stab of pain. Yet no more self-deception, pain or no. I have to confess and this alone can wash off my burns.

What a relief it is to be true to oneself! How sober I feel with this resolve to confess! No clogging in the brain, no congestion in the mind. I am mediocre, I am going to live a mediocre life with a little bit of love, a small patch of garden, plentiful of smiles and a few priceless trifles.

I won't aspire to be great. I won't write. I will confess.

* * * * *

Now I place down my confession before T. T. My voice trembles visibly like that of a penitent before the Inquisition. The incorrigible T. T. looks up straight into my eyes—"So you've written your confession?" Written? Then I have written something. But I was ~~not~~ have had cause to remark before writing ~~so~~ remarkably easy.



THE THREE PANDITS

ADHIR KUMAR BOSE

Among the famous pandits in a certain town, one was a grammarian, the other a jurist and the third a poet. Once a beggar came to the door of the grammarian and asked for alms. The latter shouted, "O fool, why do you waste your time begging?"

Sir, what else can I do to fill my belly?"
"Learn Grammar".

"But how can that appease my hunger?"

"You really are an idiot," remarked the grammarian. "Words are everything. Go and learn the rules of speech and writing. That will solve your problem."

The poor man felt dejected and went to the house of the jurist. When the judge heard him, he asked, "Can you prove that you are hungry?"

"Sir, the depression in my stomach does it."

"Oh, that is no proof. Sometimes that is a sign of health. Or it may mean that you have some trouble with your digestion."

"Believe me, Sir, I am hungry. Give me some food."

"Look, the laws demand that there must be some proof of your hunger," commented the jurist, "Can you produce a witness to prove that you are hungry? The sentence 'I am hungry' stands without any proof. It does not say why you are hungry, how you are hungry, since when you are hungry."

Rather sad, the beggar moved to the next house—the poet's. Narrating to him his tale of woe, he begged for something to eat. The poet listened to him and enquired, "Why do you wander carrying your worries with you everywhere? Why don't you forsake them, and live in the world of imagination that is not concerned with these petty realities?"

"I am really hungry. Give me some food," the beggar said.

"What a person you are! If you are hungry, drink deep at the fountain of poetry, and forget your woes. Come, I will read out some poems to you."

The poor man went next door and related to the owner of the house his experiences with the three pandits. He begged for something to eat. The householder took pity on him and gave him food, after which the man bid goodbye to his benefactor, blessing him before he turned to go.

When the beggar was gone, the householder

thought of teaching a lesson to the three learned men. The next day he invited all of them to dinner. In the evening the three pandits arrived at the appointed hour and the householder warmly welcomed them. He seated them in his living room and started a discussion. He kept them occupied for quite some time, when feeling hungry, one of the guests suggested that it was time for dinner.

Profusely apologising for the delay, the householder conducted them to the dining room. He then asked them to be comfortable and requested them to do full justice to the food. But the invitees were at a loss to understand what their host was talking about, for on the table, instead of the good food there were books.

As they were doubting the sanity of their host, the latter said, "Sir Grammian, take this Panini and start eating. It is delicious and the words and roots it contains will satisfy your hunger". And so saying he handed him a Panini grammar.

Turning to the jurist, he presented him with a bulky volume on law and requested him to eat as much from it as he desired. And to the poet he gave a gildedged book of poems.

The three guests stared at one another. They felt insulted. One of them blurted out: "Sir, you invited us to dinner, and not to a tomfoolery."

"Sir Grammian," answered the householder, "I thought you lived on books or else you would not have asked a hungry beggar to learn grammar. You can have as many roots and verbs as you desire from that volume."

"This is simply imagining things", put in the poet.

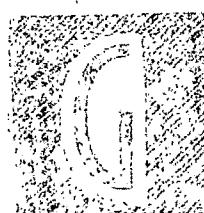
"Of course, it is," said the host. "In fact, it is you who advised the hungry beggar to live in the world of imagination, and drink deep at the fountain of poetry. So I specially brought for you this anthology."

And turning to the jurist he remarked. "Sir, I don't think you are hungry. There's no evidence. The beggar was supposed to prove his hunger, and so you are. You know well that in the eyes of law, all are equal."

The three pandits, realised their folly and learnt a lesson for all time.

GANDHI AS A READER

C. R. SHARMA



GANDHI has said in his autobiography: "During the days of my education I had read practically nothing outside text-books, and after I launched into active life I had very little time for reading. I cannot therefore claim much book knowledge. On the contrary one may be said to have read more thoroughly to digest what I did read."

Gandhi's view was to acquire knowledge as far as possible, direct from life and nature. He therefore never intended to become a voracious reader, but study was his main criterion for selecting a book. He looked for noble and nourishing ideas. Once he appealed to him he would read the book again & again & then try to follow its teachings in his own life. Gandhi regarded a good book as a source of inspiration which could act as a sum total one needed advice in the midst of doubt and digress.

Gandhi is unique as a reader. Millions of people, here read the works of Thoreau, Ruskin and Carlyle. But none studied them with devotion. Gandhi not only digested the teachings of Unto this Last, Civil Disobedience and the Kingdom of God in Within, but he practised them in his own life. Of course, Gandhi's mind was already prepared to accept such teachings. Otherwise, these books would not have had such a great impact on his life. The teachings also which his mind was not prepared failed to impress him. He read Marx's Capital at first. This very book exerted little influence on him as the author's conclusion were not to his liking.

The number of books read by Gandhi is not known as stated by him. How varied his interest in book was may be illustrated from Manmochan Singh's diary. Ghandhi was in Yeravda prison in 1932. Mahadev Desai states his query to know whether the books of Swami Vivekananda, Jules Verne or Victor Hugo were available. In the jail library, he also enquired about Shakespeare, Westward Ho! and Dickens' Great Expectations. He asked to get Edward Carpenter's Socialism, Beat to Hippomene and other classic trade tales of Hindoo from the library. He also informed his secretary that while in prison, under which he was R. L. Stevenson's "

Skinny Case" by Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. When he enquired to learn that Stevenson's "Vivian Grey" was available in the jail library he said, it must be worthy of reading.

Gandhi's father was a practical man. He learnt through work and observation rather than through books. Neither he nor anyone else advised Gandhi in his boyhood about his study. As a student he felt little urge to read books on his syllabus. The only book which he remembered to have read besides his text-books is the student reader viz. Skawan's Pitribhakti Natika. This book was purchased by his father. The story of Guru Nanak's devotion to his parents deeply impressed Gandhi.

The habit of reading developed when he came to London to study law. In India he never read a newspaper. The years of his stay in London from 1888 to 1891---opened his eyes to the world outside. There Gandhi made acquaintance with people from different spheres of life. They often referred to books and authors unknown to him. When the theosophist friends invited him to read the Bhagavad Gita with them he felt embarrassed. Till then he did not read the Gita either in the original or in translation. Gandhi's knowledge of Sanskrit at that time was not adequate for the study of the Gita in the original. So he read Devoni Anand's translation entitled The Song Celestial. The language of the Gita made a deep impression on him. Ever since all his acquaintance with Gita it became his constant companion. The influence of the Gita on the development of Gandhi is inestimable. In case of doubt and crisis he always turned to the Gita for solace and comfort.

On 20th of June he read all the English translations of the Gita. He regarded Arnold's version as the best. It was again Arnold's The Light of Asia that made him interested in the study of Gita. The charm of this biography of Jesus Christ that Gandhi could not leave it behind. It was only in the end, it seems that he read the other books by Arnold. Gandhi advised Mrs. Besant to read Arnold's Indian Isipatram and People of Eden. The writings of Arnold played a prominent role in introducing Gandhi to the world of books as well as to the civilisation and culture of India.

The teacher and friends referred to above requested Gandhi to read Mahatma Ghatshabha's "Theology". This book inspired him to do his duty for God, mankind & humanity.

AMRITABHAI PATEL

Gandhi, the author of *The Bhagavad Gita*, the *Bhagavata Purana* and many others. He also read much of Hinduism in London, but his study of Hinduism began here. Like the Bhagavad Gita, the Bhagavata of Valmiki was a constant source of spiritual inspiration to Gandhi. He liked the Bhagavata. Once, he had recorded the real history in India. H. C. Out's translations of the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* and Griffith's *Purayana* were also known to him. He suggested that Allen Behn should read them.

While knowledge of Hinduism "created" in him a interest in other religion. He read the *Talmud*. The Old Testament did not appeal to him. He liked the New Testament, particularly the teachings of the "Sermon on the Mount". He discovered that the messages of the Bhagava, Jesus Christ and the Guru were basically the same. Renunciation, sacrifice and patience were the main tenets of all great religions of the world.

Gandhi first came to know about Muhammad's greatness through Carlyle's *On Heroes, Hero-worship and the Heroic in History*. Washington Irving's *Mohammed and His Successors* further increased his knowledge of the subject. Gandhi read several English translations of the Koran including those by Ryle and Pickthall. In his later life he read a number of books on Jewish and Muslim culture. These include Grahame's Life of Sayed Ahmed Khan, Merton's *India's Muslims*, Cuttawal Smith's *Muslims Islam in India*. Gandhi intended to translate *Aunt Ali's the Spirit of Islam*. Unfortunately it is not finalised.

To understand the religion of the Parsis he read several books on Zoroastrianism. Among these was one written by Sayyid Zahra Hussaini. He also read with interest Joseph Butler's *The Analogy of Religion*.

As a vegetarian himself, Gandhi came late into contact with the advocates of vegetarianism in London. He read quite a few books on the subject by Dr. Howard Williams and Anna Kingsford and they are active supporters of vegetarianism. Gandhi had many experiments with food. He was therefore often used to learning new fact's from books on diet. Some of his friends tried to convert him to non-vegetarianism. They persuaded Gandhi to read Bechuan's *Theory of Utility* in the hope that it would convince him about the ergonomic value of meat, but they failed to win over Gandhi. Moreover, Bechuan's language seemed to him very stilted.

Even during the first few years of his stay in South Africa, Gandhi was a patron of vegetarianism. His advocacy amply proved his wide reading of Western literature on the subject.

Gandhi was also keenly interested in nature cure. He used to make experiments by treating himself and others according to the principles of the method of treatment. Just's *Return to Nature* was one of his favorite books on the subject that he carried in his pocket recommended by just himself. He quotes throughout his life, after reading, advice to a Mother he felt encouraged to return to the birth of one of his sons in South Africa.

STUDY OF LAW

As a student of law, he studied various subjects like Law, History, English, Geology, Chemistry, etc. In 1891, Gandhi's family leading him to Witwatersrand University, Johannesburg, South Africa. Personal Property or Goodbye and Hello, African Affairs. When Gandhi says "I

should, a conservative, to seek advice about my practice, he said that the study of books in alone was not enough. A successful lawyer needed to have a good background of comprehensive culture. He regretted to find that his reading was so limited; he had not even made a proper study of India's history. He advised Gandhi to read Kasturji Mehta's history of the Indian Revolt of 1857. This book Gandhi read in South Africa, but it failed to impress him.

The period in South Africa was full of significance in Gandhi's life. The years there prepared him for his future role in India. His experiments with non-violence, Satyagraha and simple living met with success in South Africa. This success encouraged him to put them into wider practice in India. The period of his life in South Africa was also fruitful in the matter of readings. He read a large number of books there. Some of the books which he read during the period deeply influenced his life and work. Those books had a considerable part to play in shaping Gandhi's moral and political philosophy.

Gandhi became interested in the different aspects of ancient Indian civilization after reading Max Mueller's India, What It Can Teach Us. He also read South Africa Patanjali's Yoga Sutras and Vivekananda's *Rajayoga*. Gandhi was imprisoned for three months in February, 1909, at Volksrust for refusing to produce the registration certificate and fingerprints. He got an opportunity to read about thirty books in jail.

Before this he read Ruskin's *Unto This Last*. This book, Gandhi declared, "brought about an instantaneous and practical transformation in my life." It was Mr. E. S. Polak who gave him the book at the railway station when Gandhi was going from Johannesburg to Durban, a journey of twenty-four hours. Once he began to read the book, it was impossible to lay it aside. The great impact which *Unto This Last* made on his mind has been described by Gandhi in a chapter of his autobiography entitled "The Magic Spell of a Book".

The teachings of Ruskin, as summarised by Gandhi are:

1. That the good of the individual is contained in the good of all
2. That a lawyer's work has the same value as the barber's, inasmuch as all have the same right of earning their livelihood from their work.
3. That a life of labour, i.e., the life of the tiller of the soil and the handicraftsman, is the life worth living.

Gandhi translated this book into Gujarati having his own title *Sarvoday*. Towards the end of his life Gandhi's emphasis was on the Sarvoday movement which had its basis in the teachings of *Unto This Last*. The definition of economics according to Ruskin is "that which teaches nations to derive and labour for the things that lead to life and which teaches men to scorn and destroy the things that lead to death and destruction." And again he says, "The art of making yourself rich is the ordinary man's economics; the secret is . . . equally and necessarily the art of keeping your neighbour poor."

The influence of these ideas is clearly discernible in the principles of Gandhian economics.

Two other books of Ruskin which Gandhi read are *The Power of Will* (also *To a Young Girl*) and *Nature's Infidel* (also *Nature's Infidels*). The former is a collection of 80 short letters addressed to the British

READER

been Merton, Rich, Paine, Emerson, Thoreau, Life of Pitt, etc.

His study of literary works is very varied in comparison with other subjects. He reads Shakespeare, Goethe's Faust, Shew's Nun Dow Sompurna and Alphonse's Beatrix, Queen Elizabeth.

Gandhi read many stories of English literature. He liked most the suggestion that Ghandi should be issued in the Devanagari script for the benefit of readers in all parts of the country.

Besides Tagore and Tolstoy, Gandhi read the following works of literature: Illiad; Aeneas; Kshatryani; Arabian Nights; Gulliver's Travels; Pilgrim's Progress; Bacon's Essays; Carlyle's French Revolution; Past and Present; Thackeray's Phiz; Poetry of Milton, Wordsworth and Browning; some works of Shakespeare; A Tale of Two Cities by Dickens; Dropped from the Clouds by Jules Verne; various books by Hugo and Rolland.

AMERICAN NOVELISTS

Two American novelists interested him. One is Uncle Tom's Cabin and the other Sinclair's We, for which he read with both pleasure and profit. In his novel Sinclair has thrown light on the social & political & unchecked habit of drinking. According to Gandhi, Sinclair was rendering honest service to American society. In each of his novels he exposed one social evil or the other. The appeal of We, however, was so overwhelming that he asked Sardar Patel, Smt. Patel and Devdutt to read it. C. Rajagopalachari did not like the book. He said that the novel was full of propaganda; there was little art in it. Gandhi replied that he had not read Zola or Hardy, but Sinclair was also no mean writer. A novel could not be despised only on the score of any propaganda. The motive of propaganda was social evil. Art in Uncle Tom's Cabin, yet the art was indispensible.

While in the Yeravda Prison, 1913-14 he read among many others, some books by Maitland's on Guple and Edward Thompson's The Inner Side of the Media. Sardar Patel was also greatly impressed towards Thompson. Dr. Jayaram Patel, who was visiting Gandhi pointed out that in fact Mr. George Thompson had brought out some unknown facts which long suppressed by the British historians.

No attempt has been made above to list all the books read by Gandhi. An organization will, however, of his reading show that he was not a book-worm. He liked those books which had an affinity with life though, out-side. Rockwood Thomas' writings he did not appeal to him and Tolstoy's classics were of secondary importance to him. He read and assimilated only those of their writings which were in conformity with his own thinking.



WILLIAM BOYD COFFEEHOUSE

K. R. BHAWA

Men of long back I recall the days in Gandhiji's life beginning from 1920 when he emerged as the national leader of India. That was the year he placed before the country the Non-Cooperation programme from the rostrum of the Special Session of the Indian National Congress held in Calcutta's Wellington Square (Now Raja Subodh Mullick Square) and presided over by Lala Lajpat Rai. Since then came down in August-September, 1947, when he was entitled with having worked what history called the "Miracle" my contact with him as a newspaper man was, on the whole, unbroken. All times this contact was close, on other occasions it was from a distance. On one occasion—during his Harijan tour undertaken in the forties—I almost got myself into trouble and found myself uncountably pressed under the unbearable tutelage of A. V. Thakkar (known as Thakkar Bami) while travelling with him in the four provinces of Assam, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.

It must be obvious to any chronicler that it is impractical to scan a vast canvas such of time and space covering about 30 years and thousands of scenes with a man like Gandhiji as the central figure in the centre. Numerous had been the occasions on which I was witness to his different moods, light and grave, humorous and humoured, and even his sarcasm and disagreeableness.

In view, therefore, making any effort at drawing his full and tall sketch of the eventful personality, I will rather concentrate on a portrait of Gandhiji which is the picture of the brightest—a portrait that I have not caught. It is one of three glimpses of him today preserved only in the minds of a few individuals who have survived by dodging death.

The particular occasion was, as far as I remember, a session of the All India Congress Committee held in Calcutta after the assumption by the Congress of ministerial responsibility in the provinces in 1937. Gandhiji and his party were then guests of Sarat Bose. Every evening there used to be a prayer meeting on the roof of Bose's house in the Woodbury Park. Lila Desai who later became a film actress was one of the regular visitors to Gandhiji. She sang devotional songs. It was that session of the A.I.C.C. that the tail end of Benkin's famous composition the Balade Mataram was clipped to express objection to the song. Babuji and others in way of explanation lent support to the move but their famous editor, Ramendra Ghosh, by opposed the mutilation. That move again started the louder move of the communalists in upholding offensive symbols as Sri and Radha in the crest of Calcutta University.

After the A.I.C.C. session was over the date of departure of Gandhiji from Calcutta was announced. However, he suddenly took unwell and the date of his departure was vacated. As soon as this information was broadcast from the radio station, then we got the news that he had to leave India—there was no alternative as he had to go to G. Woodbury Park, the secret base.

He had to leave Puri where he was met by his son-in-law, Mr. K. N. Bhattacharya. They had a talk and after negotiating the few last details of the trip, he left in a

chair in an exhausted state. He was asked waiting for breath and could just encircle—"Hari, it was hatmaji" and wished to meet him.

Meanwhile Gandhiji had recovered. As soon as he learnt that the Poet was there to enquire about his health and work, anxious to come upstairs, he hurried down. Both of them embraced each other and entered the ante room for talk. Their stay inside the room was for several minutes. The unexpected meeting of the two eminent Indians under one roof was exciting both for the host and the newspapermen present there. The moment deserved to be made immortal in a photograph. Arrangements for the purpose were made.

Tegore and Gandhi then came out of the room and sat down in the chairs facing the side-table. Tegore's slippers left outside the room were put at a different place when he went inside. While seated in the chair and having farewell chats with the host, the Poet was mechanically trying with his feet to reach for his slippers which were not there. Gandhiji noticed it and could spot out his slippers near the legs of another chair. He stooped down and brought them out and placed them just in front of the Poet to put on.

The photographer, a very competent and successful news photographer of Calcutta rightly anticipated that the supreme moment—Gandhiji helping Tegore to put on his slippers—had come and his camera unclickingly clicked. And yet the much expected photograph was spoiled! For none but the host himself accidentally came between the camera and the subject. The scene could not be repeated and there was only one regret with us that this unique record of the pictorial history of India was lost. The memory of the classic courtesy scene today however remains ingrained in the minds of only a few of us who were then present.

There was another equally worthy occasion when I and my friend the late Nipen Ghosh were interested spectators of almost the same scene though there was no arrangement made to have a photographic record of it. It was an arranged meeting between Gandhiji and the first Nazul Hossain Cabinet members at "Panjani", the residence of Nazul Ronjer Sarkar. It was a closed door affair for discussing the then topical and burning issue, the demolition of thousands of tenements belonging to the middle-class Bengali Hindus.

The meeting lasted for about two hours and we two were "watchers". When the talks concluded and the door was flung open we could see that Captain was also standing on the raised platform over by the steps down and were on the ground floor. Gandhiji's slippers which were at a distant corner of the hall were brought by H. S. So rawal who whose company years after he worked to ("Miracle") and out at the right place. Rawal said it was who helped Gandhiji get away from the police again.

In neither case, however, it was anything but showing India courtesy which had in the course of period did not forget to show whenever there were such occasions for it.

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